THE WOOING OF QUIMBY'S DAUGHTERS

AND OTHER POEMS

LOUIS CARL MAROLF

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THE WOOING
OF
QUIMBY'S DAUGHTERS
AND OTHER POEMS

A Poetic Nosegay of Lyrics,
Ballads, Odes and Tales

By

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TO MY LATE MOTHER

Who first told me fairy tales
This little Tribute to her love and art is thankfully
dedicated by an unforgetting Son

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Preface

It is almost obligatory, in such a prosaic age as ours persists to be, to introduce a new volume of poems with prose. This little matter of politeness, formality, and non-offensive conformity being disposed of, I need only remind prospective readers in passing that many a great movement in the growth of poetry has been ushered in by a preface somewhat beyond the expected or ordinary. If this shall be perceived as the goal or ideal of the present preface, all efforts to make it significant shall be amply rewarded.

In compliance with this apparently necessary formalism, I have also placed "My Smithy" at the head of this volume. It was after great deliberation that I chose between this, and its companion-piece, "My Lines." The former poem finally seemed more in accord with what might be expected by the average reader of a new book of poems, while the latter appealed to me rather as an achievement toward which all poems in their autobiographical chain strove with unerring poetic progress. And yet, upon closer examination of this Smithy of mine, it will be noted that it contains neither a Chaucerian address to my "little boke," nor a summary in verse of what might be expected, nor an invocation to the Muses, the daughters of an Apollonian or Miltonian inspiration. I wanted the reader

to find in the place of honor simply a quite modern reminder that the true inspiration of the poet is work with the elements of his art, with the natural consequence that he will come upon unexpected, never before realized combinations of ideas and ideals, as if by accident, which is the very essence of true inspiration. The inevitableness of such successful expression in poetry is then said to be a product of pure genius, which has always been regarded with superstitious awe. But it is really the faithful, persistent daily working with the facts of life which reveals to the poet the beauty-words and faith-words of which his mother-tongue is capable, by which he "stumbles on beauty's tryst or finds the word that comes from God."

And as these flowered life-fact-words arranged themselves before my eyes in an unfailing, almost logical sequence, the whole work appeared to me as a great Wreath of Poetic Nosegays, assembling themselves in groups of four Sprays; the first of these, a story of a triple pioneer courtship; the second, a miscellany of authenticated autobiography; the third, a character-study in Americanism and culture by example; and the fourth, a later sequence of modern moods and measures:—A book of poems modern in arrangement, execution and inspiration!

A Little Novel in Verse

The placing of "The Wooing of Quimby's Daughters" in the present volume is a concession to the

popular interest in love-themes, the short story or the novelette, and novelties in general in the realm of literature,—all this, however, in the medium of verse. For I am convinced that if we ever build up a poetry for the future, it must be done in some such manner as indicated in this book.

When I decided upon the meter of this poem, there was in my mind a compromise form between what seemed to me the lawless rhythms and cadences of free verse, and the often over-rigid measures of formal prosody. A form between these two seemed to be decidedly in order. Discarding rhyme, I strove to let mainly the meter produce the artistic effects of the tale. The division into stanzas was then a ready consequence. The alternately masculine and feminine end-feet in the three-stress lines gave just the proper pause to produce that rising and falling, or hesitating lilt, in which I wished to see the story move onward. In the frequent repetitions of words and ideas we have a further artistic means of pleasing the perceptions, as in the stanza beginning:

> Quimby went on in his telling,
> Telling of old-time tales;
> Told, till all had left him,
> All but Annie, his wife—

and so on, through the stanza. All these elements of primitive poetry thus assembled, occurred to me as a most felicitous composite medium for the expression of the spirit of pioneer days, as far as

this might be done through the meter. It has always seemed to me that such studies are extremely worthy of emulation by us present-day poets.

But even in such a comparatively regular meter-scheme we must have disturbing irregularities, in order to guard against monotony, as for example—

To Mother, with loving attention—
To Maud, Madge, and Millie—
And who were worthier than they were?—

Further, as in—

There one look of Madge's
Chilled his eager good will.

Such lines as—

Hopeful were Jack, Joe and Jimmie—

may then be taken to suggest the quickened emotions of those mentioned, as also in the later occuring line—

Quimby, Jack, Joe and Jimmie,

and its context. In fact the entire sixth stanza of Part II is an excellent illustration of the changing emotional effects of the events or incidents described. It runs as follows:

Gallant as an any soldier,
Gentle as old-time knights,
Each led down his lady,
Down to the landing-place—
Quimby, Jack, Joe, and Jimmie;
Found the steamer moored;
Busy the crew was unloading,—
Much surprising all,—
Prairie-plows, in number,

Three,—and bright, and strong;
Three huge yokes for oxen,
Six great oxen also.

The hearts beat higher here, as is shown by the dactyls in the first two lines. The third line, again, is regular, just as the careful leading of these pioneer ladies by their knights, down to their goal over those flag-stones,—a goal in sight always quickening our hearts, if not our motion. The next three lines depict the stationary steamer, by the regular meter. Finally, the broken-up elements of the stanza indicate both the successive surprises, caused by the unusual objects unloaded, and even the very manner of the successive perceptions of the onlookers.

And in some such manner as this, one might analyze the entire poem, for it is purposeful in every line, and in every artistic aspect. In spite of the prevalent banal, sophisticated views upon matters of verse-making, I still endeavor to write in the child-mind, and thus the poet-mind, which is after all but another way of saying, in the spirit of a really creative imagination, to which we clearly owe all our material progress as a nation. It is time now to begin the agitation of an adequate imaginative interpretation of this marvelous progress, and its elements and symbols in terms of the age-old never-changing language of beauty, vision and inspiration. This is my greatest endeavor.

A Poetic Autobiography.

The Second Spray of this Poetic Nosegay is really my earlier artistic autobiography, thanks to my habit of appending the exact date of composition to my first drafts,—a habit faithfully adhered to even to this day. These Whisperings were intended to be published separately, together with "The Wooing of Quimby's Daughters," under the title, "Whisperings and Quarryford," by subscription, because of my poetic lack of funds. That luckless subscription progressed to not quite one hundred names—not one-third the required number—and has been most unromantically hanging fire ever since.—But this time we must succeed!—It is evident that in this part of the present volume lie the germs of whatever poetic future I may be destined to possess. Here I perceive in turn, as through a glass darkly,—my peculiar management of the elements of the poet's art; my conciseness and succinctness of expression; my leaning toward the poetic narrative; my tendency to construct my own stanzas or forms; my faults, peculiarities, idiosyncrasies and perhaps mannerisms, which often struck me so forcefully as to seem almost too intimate to be exposed to the world in this manner,—like a sudden confronting of myself in a great mirror; and finally, my rudimentary efforts to solve, or contributions to the solution of poetic problems for our literature.—

Thus write each song as on the date
Thou wroughtst it down complete

At first, recast into the state
Thy conscience now deems meet,
But sparingly, as not to bar
That ancient version's sense,
Though faulty it may be, nor mar
Thy history's defense.

This is the finished form in which I couched my theory of composition and revision. It is the critical tenet put into practice in "The Boy's Chant to the Flowers." This crude effusion had neither regular meter, nor passable rhyme and apt word-choice when first drafted. Now it may stand in my poetical history as something suggesting the earlier poems in English and American literature, as an illustration of the saying, that the history of the race repeats itself in the individual, which the subtitle may connote. There may be found in it, if we will, orderly development of theme, motion or action, some felicity of expression and a quaint, primitive atmosphere. "Lacinda" is a groping through the magical mazes of the lyrical ballad, the first actual experience of the supreme passion to compel expression. Perhaps the most significant element in this is the solution of the emotional content and the interpretation of the customary farewell in love poetry. There is no real parting, and relief from the pangs of passion, except in death,—not actual death, or even ugly suicide, but imaginative, artistic death, in accordance with the poetic nature of such expression. Then there is also a patriotic sentiment in this ballad. "Old Year's Eve" is a religious ode,

my first effort in depicting emotions changing in their meter, and dignity of thought. Then we have, in these three early attempts, the poetic phenomenon of a fitting introduction to the entire Spray. The severe Greek portico of "When My Fancy Spoke" invites us to enter into the succeeding primal themes of nature, love and religion, unstudied, unpremeditated and inviolate.

Poetic Dawn Begins with 1904

Dawnlight begins with the year 1904, my first most productive year. "Leon and Helen" is the controlled, but passionate love-life of the Greek South, going beyond the usual love-song in that it holds up the actual state of marriage as the ideal, not merely the present enjoyment of courtship. "Whatever Is, Is Best" endeavors to reconcile didacticism with beautiful images, while "Greatness" is a study in a constrained symbolism from nature, in which the rhyme is so subordinated as to be almost unmarked—a trick I have practiced, though unconsciously, several times since this early day. There is something to me fascinating in the consciousness that the rhyme-music is present, though, like a modest maiden, retiring behind the screen of the weighty thought, and the surface-dignity of near-blank verse. Similarly, in "My Country," 'My Native Land," and "Iowa," I resolved and endeavored to express, through artistic agencies, the impassioned, elevated inspiration, and rejoicing love for my state, and my incomparable nation.

In "The Lark of Fearingdale" we meet with the

introduction of another theme, which flowers out into an elegiac strain in "My Old Home," and "A Child's Sweet Call." "The Lark of Fearingdale" is a ballad with a moral attached, dealing with the old poetic problem whether to express this directly, or leave it to be inferred. The concluding stanza leaves the solution to the inference of the auditor in the story, in that it both interprets, and sounds out the situation suggested in the first strophe. "An Elegy on My Old Home" records faithfully the mental images, and their accompanying emotions in my inner being, as the true incidents occurred, leaving me free to interpret my experiences as I chose, without being accused of moralizing for someone else. What is true of the Elegy is simply intensified in "A Child's Sweet Call"—a dwelling on the details of an unforgettable event tragical to a deep and lasting affection.

A Symphony in Verse.

With the poem, "The Dandelion," another strain is introduced. This has to do with nature and art, the love of the out-of-doors, and its adequate expression through the elements of poetry. "The Dandelion" is an almost perfect symmetrical comparison between the life-story of that humblest of flowers, and the interpretation of this story in a spiritual manner, thanks to my early acquaintances with the best hymns of the Lutheran church. But from the rather conscientious symmetry of this poem we pass easily to the symphonic meter-and-rhyme play

of "The River of Music." This serves as a monument to my efforts to create something original by transcribing what I conceived to be a symphony in music into verse. A Prelude, with the leading moods of grandeur, rapture and inspiration, introduces the main themes, which are evolved in seven typical movements. The first of these, under the poetic guise of the Home of Music, describes the various instruments from which the spirit of this stranger in a strange land, this Ruth in Israel's land, is evoked. In the image of the Spring, or rivulet, in the second movement, we recognize the introduction of an actual piece of music, with its manifold possibilities of time variations and moods. The movement increases in tempo, volume and liveliness, under the emblem of the Rill of Music, only to assume the roar, speed, turbulency, and destructiveness of the symbolical Mountain Stream, in the fourth movement. But Music must descend again into the calmer, richer and more picturesque levels of the plain, in the fullness of the Brook, amplified by a summary of all previous themes, at the beginning of the sixth movement, and culminating in the strong, plenteous and powerful current of the actual River of Music, which continues to swell and broaden and deepen, with the roar, the whirling, and the turgidity of it all, into the very fullness of Music herself, the rich Ocean of all melody and sweetness and strength. The Postlude then takes up the introductory moods of the Prelude very briefly again, adding and amplifying the spiritual

significance of the entire symphony, barely suggested in the sixth movement, at the hand of the story of Ruth and Naomi, finally, and above all, closing with a vision of eternal realization of all heavenly music.

What an ideal of modern poetry, therefore, looms here in the transcription of the spirit of the elusive art of music into the poetic form of a symphony of words, and holding it there in solution! It is not a perfect work, to be sure, but it may be a fair beginning. It serves as an effort to give expression to those words and images we must supply for ourselves when we hear only the music.

Briefly, the remaining pieces of Whisperings in the Dawnlight exemplify as many artistic problems with their solutions from my view-point. "A Day of Delight" proposes to bring to precipitation, as it were, the peculiar nature-mood of a certain ideal day late in August; "Farewell" is an attempt to conjure away from the pain of parting even its sadness, which I saw so much over-emphasized, and to set all this in a delicate frame and background of nature, suggested by the forget-me-not, with its interpretation as applied to this situation. More pronounced is the setting from nature in "The Wonderful Land of Dreams," with which is blended the unconquerable vivacity, the charm, and the imaginative strength of the child-mind. In "An Epicure's Ode to an Orange," the artistic aim has been to produce an appealing fusion of a luxurious tropical background and a rich mood of humor, and to

contrast this with the near-arctic storm raging just beyond the curtained window pane.

The Need of Labeling Our Poetry

If I now have succeeded in making anything clear at all, it must be this, that my poetry has not been drawn out of the blue sky merely, but that there exists a conscious artistic aim and purpose behind each poem, and that there is some attempt at originality in carrying out the pre-conceived plan. Personally, I am convinced of the utter inability of even the average reader of poetry adequately to appreciate even the most ordinary poetry. I am going to make another revolutionary statement! Most of the poetry now printed—even the best—ought to have tags attached to it to inform the reader what it is or what it really means. In other words, the reader needs a clew in connection with the particular poem by which he might be enabled to produce imaginative activity on the theme suggested in an intelligent and satisfying manner. These are two of the most potent reasons why I label my poems with a minuteness bordering on that of the scientific critical apparatus of the professional arbiter of literary standards.

But witness the moods of my poetic Sunrise.

I felt the need of encouragement in my poetic pursuits, and still do feel it. From time to time I have wondered what the fate of this element in my nature will be,—whether it will meet ultimate suc-

cessful fruition or not. This fear or dread I have repeatedly treated as a type of all other types of discouragement. In "The Better Day" I have tried to set this forth on the strength of the pleasure and the hope, the possible publication of my poems aroused in me. "Winter and Spring" strengthens this same mood, and expresses it more picturesquely, while "Twilight-Tide," with its broken rhythms, reproduces exactly the mood intended in such a rondel-lyric with dramatic tendencies. And, as if in an inevitable sequence, follows the "Poet's Vesper Song," once more re-enforcing the behest of My Fancy, When She Spoke to me, that in this subdivision of Sunrise lay the expression of my struggle between Life and Art.

"To a Belated Katydid" simply derives courage and beauty from nature, for want of a better source. "Peace, Why Tarriest Thou?" is a passionate appeal for the rest and peace of creative success, which could hardly be better expressed than by a maiden's yearning for her lover—not as is customary, by the stormy desire of the lover for his love. Then the lines "To the Evening Star" pray for guidance, leading with uncanny logic to the wistful conjuring-up of final success in "Love in a Cottage," and the resignation of the "The Lover's Prayer."

These are the poetic embodiments of the creative thoughts that occupied me during the years of 1907-1909, as those thoughts struck root in my own life.

Life and Love the Great Theme

But nowhere has the struggle for artistic success so come to expression as in the dramatic lyric ballad cycle, "Life and I," the severe Colloquy between Flesh and Life upon the calmer background of the factual life-story of the Heart and the Soul. Youth, Manhood, and Old Age are eternal, at least in so far as anything can be so on earth; but in among these facts of life, there is many a transitory mood that comes to expression, usually in conflict with Life, who then points out the way to "the one right heart that doth the same—shall be all thine." This final return to hope and youth and love is inevitable, prompting again such little bursts of song as "Early Spring," and even the passionate "Trysting Sighs," culminating in the intermittently recurring, "Where is thy laughing face?"—"That last and hopeless word!"—

But, as if in answer to this question, My Fancy re-appeared, in the Afterplay, and "commanded" me I must simply live up to the heart, courage, and success for which I yearned and prayed. There was no other alternative for me. Either—"Publish!"—or—"Be a lonely heart!" There is no reply to my temporizing. But, Oh,—

> And here I published and am filled
> With hope that I shall see
> That Other,—as My Fancy willed,—
> With Her forever shall be!—

And yet, although this Other may mean a human

heart in my private life, She has been transfigured into a being of beauty that must be manifested to my fellowmen. There could hardly be a more appropriate vitalization of such communication, or "publishing," than we find in the Third Spray of this Poetic wreath, the almost austere character-study of "Master Franz Hemsterhuis."

A Lay of Americanism from Holland

The pivot upon which the life and action of this whole colloquy turns is Piet's visit to the Master, and its purpose. This young Hollander, originally an idealist from the university, comes to Master Hemsterhuis on New Year's Eve, 1766, almost completely disillusioned, to ask the Master for advice in his life-puzzles. He comes to Hemsterhuis to ask "about his life," and for his "teaching for him." Out of this simple question, and all its antecedent and attendant circumstances, grows the tale of the past of both Piet and Hemsterhuis. Out of this query proceeds for us the complete knowledge of the character of both individuals. Upon this request there arise, as upon a cameo, the history of Holland, and the idyllic beauty of Dutch home-life; the significance of the past to the present, and of the present to the future; and the truth of life to be derived from this blending of both past, present and future into a concrete, typical object-lesson for our present-day problems in our country.

I know of no better way of showing our modern poetic proletariat that we of the poetic guild are in

earnest, and intend to write poetry that actually has something about it that can be interpreted if necessary.

The Fourfold Test for a Poet

As I conceive this our great mission, there are four general requirements the novice in present-day poetry must meet before he can hope to attract attention. These test questions are:—

Can he tell a story?

Is he authentic?

Can he communicate culture?

Is he modern in spirit and substance?—

The first three of these tests I have tried to satisfy up to this part of my preface. Spray Four, and last, may serve to answer the fourth question. Poetically speaking, the substance of this division of the poems may be called Moods, and the spirit, Measures of Today. Among this group, none could come more appropriately to hand now than the first two, the sonnets,—the one Occidental, the other Oriental, in form. I am in favor of keeping alive the antiquity of our present-day culture, such as it is; for the ancient and modern elements in it are really inseparable. It is well, therefore, to reiterate here the ancient question of the origin of poetry, and answer that it means, making the creation of song a philosophy of life, with none less than the divine Creator as an example. The Persian ghazal, or sonnet, then simply carries the suggestion into the psychological field, the old realm in

which mind triumphed over matter. And the ballad of the Tanner of Kenmare shows how this principle is worked out from the artistic standpoint, for here the traditional ballad form is compelled to yield to modern briskness of narrative, a pace to which it has not usually been accustomed. "The Race of the Plodders," "The Wooden Horse," and "The Ballad of Nineteen-Now," should be compared with "The Tanner and His Raid," if we wish to gain some conception as to how this primitive form might be brought to house a variety of themes, both old and new, in a more freely constrained manner. It is not the creation of new forms that we need so much as the deeper development of the older ones; although we ought to make some contribution of our own to the art, if possible, in the matter of form.

The Trinity of Life—Work, Love and Religion

"Life's Explorer" gives a new turn to the philosophy of song. It is an exceedingly modern characteristic to try to analyze life. We find here a conservatively poetic interpretation of that great phenomenon called Life, as a unified trinity of life-work, love and religion. "Treasures of Life," a little further on in this autobiographical sequence, deals with the same subject, but in the form of a rhymeless lyric, relying on the repetition of similar or identical sounds as a rather novel rhyme-effect;—the artistic form is never forgotten here, no matter what the theme. This last

fact is especially brought out by "The Song of the Seasons," an example of a song that might be suitable for any season, overcoming the often awkward obstacle of inappropriateness of songs to the time of the year. "Wooing Sleep" aims to carry sound-music to its simplest, yet highest typical development. The "Aphorisms" also have an artistic problem of their own. They are a broad criticism of life as it is lived now, and of art as it is conceived to be in relation with life. The aim here has not been to produce terse and incisive epigrams, but only to create a different way of writing sayings with some point to them. We ought to get out of the habit of writing in forms and moods which critics can adversely compare with standards that really hamper poetic progress. Otherwise, why be, and have our being as moderns?—

Another fact in our all-inclusive life, to which we ought to become accustomed, is the emphasis of other love than that of man and woman, so long as such love is beautifully legitimate. "To A Beautiful Child" calls attention to this feeling in a rather sublimated intensity, but I shall let it stand in its place. "The Blessed Water-Ouzel," with an almost equal degree of feeling, expresses what we might call the love for a spiritualized conception of life and art, or whatever similar to this we may make out of it; though in a succinct narrative form, which, however, we cannot over-emphasize, for this is a story age, and we must give the public its stories also in our

special medium. Incidentally, "Salema" and "Phillippa" are both types of love which are beautiful in their uniqueness, and youthful fervency. They may approach that passion now so unreservedly, almost shamelessly laid bare before all the world, but they temper it with the balsam of reserve.

The Modern Mood of Despair

There is a very modern mood of despair running through the poems at this point in the sequence. And this mood has a very real foundation in my own life. Seemingly imprisoned in uncongenial, adverse, and discouraging environments, I persistently struggled for an ideal of artistic freedom in such ways as were open to me. I felt my powers, but my wings were bound fast to my sides. It is a feeling shared by thousands of my fellow Americans. Hence they cannot help but understand me. "The Race of the Plodders," with its humor, which only emphasizes the tragedy of it all, is but the generalized application of the more specific theme of the life-history of "The Blessed Water-Ouzel," the professional yearning of the poet. Only the poetic reply to a request for rhymes from a friend at work among the lowliest of the low in the "black belt" of the South could inject a mood of prophetic hope into this period and its work. "The Pine Torch" bears witness to this ray of light in that twilight, but not without a grace-note of envy for a success I could not call mine.

Even "The Penitent," with its spiritual grief,

discouragement, and fear, and its efforts to overcome these by sheer faith, is not without its ray of hope. But in "Married!" all this mood of despair is redoubled, and there reaches its climax. And yet, is not this very effort and act of successful expression the best remedy for its relief? This certainly is also a modern trait.

Modern Short Stories in Verse

In logical sequence once more, and in series, as so often before this, we next meet a half-dozen poems combating the very evil that would deprive us even of the remedy against despair in the worst, the spiritual form,—infidelity, unbelief, atheism. Of course, it is rather the fashion in our times to be just what these poems contradict. "The Great Gap" reproduces the effect of a scientific age on poetry, in the rigid prosody of its lines. "The Beast-Man'" expresses the soul of realism, with all its ugliness, sophisticated knowedge, and cynical attitude toward nature and human life, stated here with the purpose of combating that spirit through its own poison. In "The Wiseacre," the modern attitude toward the Bible is similarly castigated, while in "I Seem Like Adam," the present-day position toward the art of poetry receives its thrust of irony, sarcasm, and satire, in the same concentrated style of expression. Finally, in "Impatience," we feel the modern reaction against nature, and often against her God, symbolically pointing to the result of the mental standpoint criticised in the

four previous poems. But "Salema at the Saviour's Tomb" is a very object-lesson of faith—true, saving faith—and original interpretation of the Scriptures, which is one of the fruits of such real faith that conquers all things. It is a faith not easily maintained, however, and if we wish to express that fact in the newest medium or style, we require a mode of blank verse reproducing such struggle in a realistic manner, following the best traditions of the short story, except for the poetic atmosphere.

It was with considerable hesitation that I included in this collection such poetic rhapsodies as "The Seasons in Rhyme," and other similar pieces. I found, however, that there was much in them that could move me to retain them. Fragmentary, or even puerile, as they may seem to many, these strummings, or this tuning up of the poetic instrument, these poetic studies, have their own special merits. "The Seasons in Rhyme" is simply a repetition of the music of the four main measures of English prosody, progressively developing the four seasons through four irregular stanzas. "Rhymes and Stanzas," a little further on, exemplify in finished units the spirit of seven of the principal fixed stanzas built under the influence of the French and Italian forms in the history of English literature. "Echoes from Old Greece" typify three measures—hexameters, Sapphics and choriambs—as adapted to modern accents, yet achieving the unity of thought in each little miniature poem. And lastly, in "Rhyme Play," we have a series of adaptations

from stanza-forms created by certain of our classics of only yesterday, not even forgetting magazine verse, and nonsense media. But after all, how different from their original ancestors are the stanzas here adapted in my own way! It is simply another proof that we cannot successfully imitate those who have invented successful forms in the past, unless we either adapt their forms in our own manner, or follow their example in originating forms of our own.

The Modern Lyric

There is something plaintive and dolorous; something still, though less bitterly, related to the moods of despair in the previous strain of poems, in "The Seasons in Rhyme." It is a mood that carries with it a twinge of tragedy in the lyric, "The Indian Grave," which ushers in a group of so-called modern lyrics, of which the name and variety and form are legion. "The One Night" is anomatopoetic in type, with something of exaltation in it, and "The Sea" approaches closely the broken rhythms of a dramatic lyric. Other types in this collection are, "The Sun" and "Thy Bitter-Sweet Smile," the one throbbing with the mood of grandeur, and the other vibrant with that of love. In all of them, two or more poetic thoughts are permitted to take poetic shape in what seems to be their appropriate form, and to come to a free-restrained relationship in the final lines of the lyric. This is my way of doing; I do not know whether the critics will pass me in this

or not. I only contend that we should at all times be modern in our moods and measures according to our best lights. This is only a prosaic way of saying what is said poetically, and repeatedly, in "Rhymes and Stanzas." The first three modern lyrics here also point toward a future new awakening in the treatment of nature, not the weak-kneed, magazine-verse manner, but a robust, virile expression of her moods. "Milton's Self," like a shade from another world, hovers between lyric and descriptive treatment, and suggests the greatest object-lesson of such enjoyment of nature in poetry that we possess.

The Modernized Song

"The Song of the Hearth-Smoke" marks another transition in this wonderfully inevitable sequence of modern moods and measures. It is rightly named a song, for it is a speciman of that peculiar form of lyric, which combines so well the old stanza-forms with the modern artistry of rhyming and compactness of expression, the predominating lyrical quality of the type being fused with the epigrammatic and startling combination of ideas, so much admired today. "The Song of the Spring Wind" is only a sister-lyric to that of the Hearth-Smoke, both in origin and in spirit. "The Spirit of the Middle West," and its companion-piece, "The Gate of the Middle West," though widely separated by the dates of their first drafts, are other examples of this song-type. "Who

Am I?" "Land O' Leal," and perhaps, "My Lines," simply show the range of theme and form to which the general type may be developed. In fact, modernity is very strongly pronounced, even in the last three songs, in the employment of unusual stanza-forms, or the adaptation of more common forms, "Who Am I?" typifying the new to a greater extent than the two succeeding songs.

Home Building and Housekeeping

The theme in the vicinity of "The Song of the Hearth-Smoke," as has already been suggested, is life-work, or home-building, and its varying elements. The double-mood of L'Allegro and Penseroso in "Milton's Self" typifies the two spirits of courtship days. We have then a song of the spirit of home-making, or the imaginative overcoming of the hum-drum routine of prospective housekeeping, in "The Song of the Hearth-Smoke." "My Home" logically gives the location for this home-building. It is one of the rare, almost purely descriptive poems in this Spray. We must not have many such productions in our age, and these few must be short, and have some point to them. The making of men and women, either in prospect or retrospect, the very business of a true home, is portrayed in "A Ballad of Nineteen-Now." And the graphic warning against the worm-at-the-core dangers threatening the sanctity of such a wonderful institution assumes artistic form in "The Wooden Horse."

Upon the achievement of these prerequisites of a good home, follows the leisure of the safely established home-life, a pastime that brings fruit in studies of life, art, and religion. The modern lyric, "The Sun," strikes the keynote to such studies. Here the great natural phenomenon of the universe, the Sun, is seen in a flash, as the visible representative messenger of Him Who maketh His servants flames of fire. It is a vision that points logically to such heights as Nebo or Pisgah of old, from where a divine promise is beheld as being fulfilled, of which the sonnet, "My First Aeroplane" gives an instance. Akin to this, except that it is somewhat more earthly, is the interest in real music, in living poesy, and true expression and appreciation of the dramatic arts, as indicated, respectively, in "Echoes from Old Greece." And yet we never get far away from our own home and country. "Apple-Plucking Time" is France, American Middle West, home, and life in general, all in one. Even American youth re-appears, with its cleanly frolic and rollicking and boisterous exuberance, singing "The Song of the Spring Wind," and ending in the exquisite fooling of the various moods of "Rhyme Play." Then comes a burst of more serious sentiment, "Thy Bitter-Sweet, Sweet Smile," rising finally to expressive heights of sympathies clasping the healing hands of nature, and the failing hands of a less fortunate brother, and even a larger humanity. The two songs

of "Summer Magic" testify to these feelings. It is verily the spirit of the modern in poetry as we now should have it—keeping in living touch with all humanity of both past and present, that we see in this entire strain of the "Fourth Spray."

Humanity and World-Questions

But there is only one step between sympathy with humanity and the world-questions which agitate her. It is certainly very modern again to be concerned over such problems. "The Plaint of World-Peace," is an impassioned expression of a feeling that moves us this very hour. There are divided opinions upon this, as well as other international questions, but as for me and my portion of this great nation, "Spirit of the great Mid-West, arise!" Mid-West, arise, not only to take your stand on the world-wide question of peace, but stand up for national culture in its finest sense! Become, even while doing this, a supporter of living artists who link Greece, and the country of Shakespeare with the very scareheads of today's newspaper. That certainly is being modern through and through, with a will and a vengeance. "Lines on Hearing Alfred Noyes" represents an epochal incident in this present-day movement for the advancement of poetic art.

Trivial as all these themes may seem to the majority of even my readers, I have shown that they are symbolical of the subconscious modern

moods that moved me at the time of composition, and thus made and kept me a true child of my age.

And Free Verse Also!

Moreover, we modern peoples are given to revelry from time to time in all things,—given to extremes, we ordinarily say. And that again seems to be a modern trait, though in the large always a temporary one. With "The Trains of Day and Night," we begin a strain that expresses our particular American aspect of modern moods and measures in an extraordinary fashion. The theme is the most prosaic of modern facts of national life with us—the railroad. The measures are in the main four-stress lines, read in vers libre, or free verse manner, in a suspended rhythm of accents, phrases or cadences. Whatever critics may say, this is my conception of free verse, and my expression of this idea in actual practice. Superimposed on the ordinary topic of the trains that pass in the day and the night, there plays an atmosphere palpitant with a free-restrained interpetration of those plainly stated facts, which combines a peculiar surprising piquancy of the new, with the mellowness of the old. The four-stress measure, varied by three-stress, and two-stress lines, as artistic occasion seemed to demand, lends the stability of the older tradition in poetic art to this extremely modern symphony, while almost every other element of the poem—

irregularities of rhythmical feet, imagery, and flashes of connoted meaning—provides the spice and novelty and literary charm. Similar points might be emphasized in connection with "The Age and the Artist," a four-stress symphony of somewhat greater rhythmic freedom on the whole than its companion-piece just mentioned. Here the theme, an odic treatment of the seven arts, as exemplified in America, or as they may be developed here in the future, carries us to broader and higher table-lands of beauty, vision and inspiration, which is the very business of the arts, if we may indulge in paradox.

Again I take this strong instinct to build, an ambition so comparatively easy to realize in our time and clime, and transpose it into an ode in four-beat free verse on "The Streets of Progress," wringing magic from the very catalog of vehicles, and the streets on which they travel. It is this we moderns must do, if our readers wish to read about nothing except what they see with their everyday eyes, every day of their everyday lives! And I cannot explain the method for this any better than through the free verse sketch, "The Descent of the Eagles." A topic of only yesterday, an incident tickling our fancy only for a minute, an unusual occurrence in the day's travels of a much-traveled race—that is all the theme seems to be here. And yet it ought not to be wasted; someone may find a meaning in it, may give a permanent form to it, or even wrest a po-

tent inspiration from its inherent poetic worth. A prominent editor of the recent century-change once declared that no poetry could be written about a rotten log. Perhaps no magazine poetry, but the poet of today will attack any subject and distill from it some poignant poetic truth. It is time our contemporaries know this!

Facts of Life as Faith-Words

After we have indulged in the madness of ultra-modern measures, we turn to a more conservative view of poetic form,—a form in which, however, the newer and the older mingle in sweet unison. There is originality in stanza-form, rigid artistry of meter and rhyme, and a sharp juxtaposition of apparently unrelated ideas; and the dominant mood is nothing less than man's destiny in various aspects. "Who Am I?" is typical of this mood and measure, from the spiritual point of view. "Can You Guess?" lifts the veil on the ultimate state of human love.

And it is only a still more intimate destiny that is striven for in "If I Should Come." And when we have received certainty sufficient on this theme of life, all other facts of life are ours,—dawn, birth, nature, death; but now chiefly our ideal of life, humor and gayety; song, merry-making, heavenly bliss; in short: "Land o' Leal." But this unpretentious lyric is only a weak suggestion of a far more lasting mirth and happiness

than any fact of life here on earth! "Oh, what will life—all-embracing life—be like, in Land O' Leal?" Oh, it will be like telling our Father a wonderful story which we ourselves have lived better than we knew by His grace, and "cannot come to all the sum" of this sublime narrative. And will there be pain in our hearts for him who deliberately shuts himself out from this blissful country—"The Suicide?" Oh, "sore heart," do not give us this pain in that supreme happiness where we would see all united! "Take a man's, a woman's part!" Then you will solve the riddle of destiny as did "The Sonneteer," in the tragi-comic practice of his very life-work, which is typical for every poet who is worthy to be called professional in his art. A true poet never ceases to be conscious of his profession. From the angle of a conqueror of life and love, a view-point from which all love-stories engender in him a deep sympathy for the fate of lovers, there is opened to him the door to "Phillippa," a tale of old romance, swift, brief, and modernly told. And the epilogue to this strain of destiny and fate is "Radium," a sonnet realizing the age of faith, of the faith of Phillippa come down to us from the first century, and though not accepted by the majority today, yet a leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. Life then comes to be largely a transcription of its facts into faith-words, and among these wholesome humor may also be one.

And Humor a Faith-Word

"Kitty and Doggie" is child-humor keeping within the bounds of reason, word-choice, and poetics. It is a realistic record such an encounter as it celebrates produced on the mind of a little child. "The Tale of the Awful Oozle" carries us into non-sense words and ideas, and indulges in the wildest flights of the child's imagination, and adventurous instinct. In "The Battle of the Rhymers" the humor descends to the very depths of the farcical, reducing the over-refinement of poetics to ridicule. Occasional merriment and mirth, throughout babyhood, childhood, and maturity is here, as in life, the spice that offsets the heavier courses of this feast called human existence, destiny, and destination. And the Middle West with its virile song is then the symbolical noontide from whence we may look to the dawn on the one hand, and the sunset on the other, and always within our reach there loom the ideals of labor, determination, inspiration, and faith in the Lord of creation, and His divine grace.

I therefore sum up this attitude of cheerful faith in "My Lines," which amply speak for themselves. There are a few facts which this preface has emphasized throughout. The first of these is that "my lines have meaning." The entire volume is a logical sequence, based on the exact dates of the first drafts, and therefore autobiographical. There is gossamer fabric of grace and delicacy, and dream-stuff of idealism and inspira-

tion. My lines are rule-proof, and they end in pearl or bead, as the requirement might be, and all with a purpose. I console myself by auto-suggestion, addressing that peculiar feeling I possess for my art, weary of further laborious self-defense, as follows:

Then cease, my love, your fixing
  Of my queer lines,
Or you will miss my mixing
  Of bitters and wines,
That make the well and sick sing
  Of jeweled shrines!

THE AUTHOR

MY SMITHY

I sit and work in my smithy all day,
And wield my hammer with rhythmic sway,
But you see no grime, nor soot, nor spark,
Nor hear a sound, if you may hark.

My anvil—'tis the dumb blank sheet,
Whereon with hammer-pen I beat
The words of iron to steely thoughts,
And wires I tie to lovers' knots.

And as I work, and beat, and twist,
I often stumble on beauty's tryst;
And often, when I squirm and plod,
I find the word that comes from God.

Spray One of the Poetic Nosegay

The Wooing of Quimby's Daughters

A Tale of Pioneer Days of the Lime Kilns on the Iowa River

First my tale must tell of
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Then my tale must tell of
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie;
Then of Vance and Maud,
Then of Vince and Madge,
Then of Vernie and Millie;
Now and again must tell of
Madge, and Maud, and Millie;
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance;
Vance, and Vernie, and Vince;
Maud, and Madge, and Millie.

I. Quarryford Cabin

Quarryford, by the river,
That was the home of the three:
Maud, and Madge, and Millie.
Pioneer girls were they all,
All the quarryman's daughters;
Were it in times and days,
Seem to us like ages,

Ages and days ago,
When, as we hear them telling,
All was plain and blunt,
Beautiful not, but lovely;
Strong, and true, and heartfelt.

So were the times and the people,
They, our betters, say;
Such were the times and the seasons,
Such the winters and springs,
Maud, and Madge, and Millie,
Lived at Quarryford;
Quarryford, the cabin,
Broad, of giant logs,
High on the bluffs of limestone,
Nestled in native oaks,
Scorning the river below it,
Lifting its brow to the sunrise.

Far did Quarryford cabin
Look the river beyond,
Look to the rolling northward,
Far to the lowland south,—
All a billowy ocean
Tall of prairie grass,
Golden far in the sunlight;
Dotted but here and there
Dark with shadowy cloudlets,
Lazy, like wandering isles;
Bearing, like long-limbed sea-fish,
Long-stemmed flowers and berries.

Thus the cabin had heard it,
Told at evening time,
Told by its quarryman master,
How, long years ago,
How he crossed the ocean,
Crossed the watery sea;
Left the crowded eastland,
Came to the freer West;
Cut through that prairie ocean,
There at the dark, broad line;
Forded the river to cross it,
Built him a raft of oak-logs.

So the cabin heard it,
Or how would it know?
Heard it told so often
From its rough-built porch;
Heard it in the twilight,
Told to the quarryman's folks;
To Mother, with loving attention
Whirring the spinning-wheel;
To Maud, and Madge, and Millie,
Sewing, or knitting a bit,
Chatting the quarry-hands often,
When they would listen respectful:—

Quimby, he talked so gripping,
Often with flashes of wit,
Sudden, like sparks from the flint-stone
That lit his corn-cob pipe.
Ah, but never so charming;

No, nor half so sweet,
Gripped the pioneer's talking,
As, when his dreamlike words
Chanced to turn to his daughters,
His only children three,
Maud, and Madge, and Millie,—
Dwelt on their wonderful childhood.

Then was the talk of Quimby
Sweeter than any chat,
Maud, or Madge, or Millie,
Gave the quarrymen three;
For he seemed so kindly
To be hinting then,
He would give his lime-boats,
Give his ferry-boat,
All his precious lime-stone,
All to three worthy sons,
Worthy to woo his daughters;—
And who were worthier than they were?

"Still, it seems not so far off,"
Quimby recalled again,—
"Maud here, and Madge, and Millie,—
They're quite young yet, and spry.
Maud here, she's only twenty;
Madge is nineteen now;
Millie's seventeen—maybe—
Annie, now am I right?"—
And his wife, she nodded
Proudly. And he kept on:

"Maud, she came in winter—
Made her so sober, I reckon."

Quimby struck for fire, then.
Maud, she flashed reproach.
Stolen glances flitted
From the hired men to the girls;
Glances all admiring;
Yes, they were friendly, these girls;
Ah, but friendly only!—
"Yes," said Quimby once more,
"Maud, she came that winter,
Our first winter here;
Came that heavy winter
When we froze, and were snow-bound."

Jack, the quarryman oldest,
Glanced at Maud again;
Glanced so tender, defending;
Said, "Maud can't be glum,—
Only full o' life-blood—
No, she can't be cross,"
Laughed he, in kindliest effort—
Ah, but she bit her lip!—
Jack was forty, and over,
Now that he courted Maud;
Maud, she was chatty with him,
But to his love would not listen.

"Madge, she came," said Quimby,
After a quiet smoke,—

"Madge, she came when I quarried;
Built my lime-kiln there,
Built my ferry-boat below there,
When the westward road
Followed the bluffs on this side;
When I burned my lime
First in daytime and night-time,—
Then's when Madge was born,—
Madge, our business woman,
Born in our busy season."

Quimby filled his pipe-bowl,
Struck the steely flint:
Madge, she heard not, saw not,—
Studied the river's haze;
Saw not the longing glances,
Never the glances of Joe,—
Joe, the quarryman younger;
Joe, he came to her aid;
Said, with wistfullest wording:
"Madge is sensible."
There one look of Madge's
Chilled his eager good will.

"Millie, our youngest," said Quimby,
Breaking his pipe-dream off,
"Came with the river steamboats,
Plying from south to north;
Came with my little steamer,
Hauls my rock and lime
Up and down the river,—

Settlers, cattle, and goods;—
That was Millie's coming,"
And he touched her hand,
For she was always near him,—
"That's why she's so lively."

Quimby filled his cob-pipe,
Lit it again with his flint,
"Daddie, you know you are joking,"
Sweetly she chided the word,
Stroking his hand with forbidding.
Millie saw the glance
Jimmie, the quarryman youngest,
Yearningly lifted to her;
Heard what his lips were saying:
"Millie's a tender heart."
Yes, but she left at the plain words,
Went to her room in the cabin.

Quimby went on in his telling,
Telling of old-time tales:
Told, till all had left him,
All but Annie, his wife.
Then he carried her spinning,
Carried her wheel inside,
Leaving the quarry-hands thinking,
Thinking upon their seats,—
Jack, and Joe, and Jimmie,
Thinking about those girls.
"Guess they are looking for others,"
Jack drawled off, and they followed.—

This is the childhood story,
These are the girlhood days,
Maud, and Madge, and Millie,
Lived at Quarryford;
This is the bachelor story,
These are the courting days,
Jack, and Joe, and Jimmie,
Toiled for Quimby's girls:
Pined, when people were heart-felt,
Yearned when girls were scarce;
Yes, and never a whit cared
Maud, and Madge, and Millie!

First my tale has told of
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Now my tale must tell of
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie;
Then of Vance and Maud;
Then of Vince and Madge;
Then of Vernie and Millie;
Now and again must tell of
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance;
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Millie, and Madge, and Maud;
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie.

II. The Newcomers

Once again 'twas twilight
Round old Quarryford,
And on the porch of the cabin

Sat the Quimby folks,
Talking, and spinning, and chatting,
Sewing, and knitting a bit;
Cheerful, and all forgetful
Quite of that evening's pain,
Frankly when all their courting,
Millie, and Madge, and Maud,
Gently the quarrymen's wooing
Put aside, and forever.

No, but not forever,
Though they never so much,
Though they never so bluntly
Put their wooing aside.
Maud, and Madge, and Millie,
Be they never so frank,
Could not chill the hope of
Jimmie, and Joe, and Jack!
Friendly—chatty—they still were;
Yes, and who could tell,
Might not chat and friendship
Blossom to yielding and loving?

Sudden the peaceful murmur,
Murmur of voices and chat,
Suddenly broke, and was scattered
Wide by the loudest of toots.
"Listen, that's the 'Quimby' !"
Leaped from the lips of all;
Brought them to feet, and they shaded
Eyes in the growing dusk,

Far to the southward, where gleaming
Red through the river's haze,
Shone the lights of the steamer,
Sent on the breeze her puffings.

Quimby adjusted his glasses,
Quick whipped out a glass,—
"Sure, that's our own 'Quimby'!"
Quimby cried for joy.
Quick his arm he offered,
Led his help-meet down,—
Down the yard, the stone-path;
Down the steps of flags,
Broad and steep of flag-stones;
Down to the landing-place,
Built with a little store-house,
Hugged by its anchored ferry.

Maud, and Madge, and Millie,
Followed loiteringly,
Each in her sister's footsteps,
Gazes fixed on the lights.
Quick, at the steps of the flag-stones,
Jack gave Maud his arm,—
Following Quimby's example;
Joe gave his arm to Madge;
Jimmie gave his to Millie;
Gently they guided them down.
Maud, Madge, and Millie were flattered;
Hopeful were Jack, Joe, and Jimmie.

Gallant as any soldier,
Gentle as old-time knights,
Each led down his lady,
Down to the landing-place:—
Quimby, Jack, Joe, and Jimmie;
Found the steamer moored;
Busy the crew was unloading,—
Much surprising all,—
Prairie-plows, in number
Three,—and bright, and strong;
Three huge yokes for oxen,
Six great oxen also.

All were struck with wonder,
Till the busy crew,
Once more safe and sound now,
Greeted the Quimbies all;
Showed them three newcomers,
Settlers for the West,—
Three strong, stalwart fellows,
Set upon building their homes
High on the other bank there,
Where they bought in a row
Three fine eighties, these Swinkers,—
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie.

Jack, and Joe, and Jimmie,
Each kept close to his girl,
Saw with sharpness, and fearing,
How their girls now met,
Met these strangers manly,

Neat in home-spun flax,
Hats of plaited wheat-straw,
All so fresh and clean:—
Jack saw Maud look longing;
Joe saw Madge could yearn;
Jimmie heard Millie sighing:—
Ah, how the three were puzzled!

Charmed were daughters, and mother,
Sure, by these brothers three;
Captured by Quimby's daughters,
Seemed these brothers all;
Climbed, amidst the Quimbies,
Chatting, and laughing, the steps;
Nearer the girls than the hostess,—
Hostess and host, who led;
Chattering, followed the boatmen;
Lingered the quarry-hands last.
Said Jack then: "Look now in front there!
See now what figure-heads we are."

"Never you fret," said Joe then,
"Madge is a sensible girl."
"Sensible? Yes, too much so;
Far too sharp for you;
You, a common workman:—
They are owners of land,
Owners of priceless oxen;"—
That was the answer from Jack.
"Madge," replied Joe, with choking,
"Loves not oxen, nor land."

"Neither loves you, I reckon,"
Jack returned him sharply.

Joe, he quickly recovered;
"You are not sure," he said;
"I have reasons to hope yet."
"Yes, and I, too, have hopes,"
Jimmie broke in: "I'll fight, yet:
Fight for Millie, I will."
Jack, he heard the youngster,
Listened to Jimmie, surprised,
Laughed at the foolish boasting,
Laughed as if all were a joke.
So they came to the cabin,
Seating themselves by the others.

There was father Quimby,
Smoking his corn-cob pipe,
Telling his old-time stories,
All to the steamer crew,
All to the brothers Swinker,
Seated on benches around,
Seated around on the porch-floor.
Soon there appeared in the door,
Quimby's wife, and his daughters,
Asking them in to eat;
Asking in the crew-men,
Smiling in the Swinkers.

Then, within the cabin,
Back in the eating room,

Low, and freshly white-washed,
Served a belated meal,
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Served the steamer crew;
But, before all others,
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance;
Leaving the work in the kitchen
Mostly to Mother's care:
Carving of smoked ham slices,
Pouring the wheat-brown coffee.

Still, there were waiters too many,
Quite too many for nine,
So that out came Millie,
Out to father's yarns,
Smiling, and chatting, and laughing,
Never so lovely before;
Chatting with Jimmie so brightly,
Jimmie was quite entranced,—
Thought of his supping rival;
"Come for a stroll," he sighed.
Silent was kind-hearted Millie:
Said, "I must go and be serving."

Soon, stern Madge was resting
From her serving acts,
Smiling bright as never,
Chatting much with Joe;
Full of gayest fancies,
He had never heard,
Never heard from Madge yet.

'Twas a hopeful chance;
"Come for a walk," he murmured.
Madge grew silent quick;
Said, "I must go waiting,"
Leaving Joe a-thinking.

Then grave Maud was resting
Brief in her serving zeal,
Last came out a-smiling,
Cheered grim Jack with words
He had never dreamed of,
Never heard from Maud.
Cold he heard, he listened,
Though his heart grew warm,
Till, in truth to try her,
"Come for a ramble," he said.
Quiet was Maud a moment,
Then she left him in silence.

Now came out the boat-men,
Smacking their whiskered lips,
Sat at the feet of Quimby,
Swapping him river tales
Found on their latest voyage.
Ah, but the Swinkers three,
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie,—
These they would not come;
Neither would stolen glances
Into the lighted house;
Neither would sharpest listening,
Ever discover their presence.

Then the quarry-hands shifted
All the steamer crew
Over to Quarryman Quimby,
Closer together sat,
Spoke in lowered voices.
"Did she refuse you a stroll?"
Jimmie asked Joe, quite angry.
"Yes, a walk," snapped Joe.
"Yes, Maud snubbed me a ramble,"
Growled old Jack with rage.
Then they looked at the river,
Down to the distant roadway.

Suddenly Jimmie sat upright,
Staring upon the road;
Joe was staring also,
Choking caught his breath;
Jack sat unconcerned-like,
Simply looked down there;
There came Maud with Vance now;
Madge came up with Vince;
Millie came up with Vernie;
Sauntering side by side.
Jack, he muttered: "Your hopes are
Hit with—hit with—sand-bags!"

First my tale has told of
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Then my tale has told of
Vance and Vince and Vernie,
Now of Vance and Maud,

Now of Vince and Madge,
Now of Vernie and Millie:
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie;
Millie, and Madge, and Maud;
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance;
Maud, and Madge, and Millie.

III. Finding Each Other

'Twas in the days of the settlers,
Days of the pioneers;
Days when people were heart-felt,
Plain, outspoken, and blunt;
Times when women were lovely,
Beautiful not, and fair;
Times when women were needed;
Times when girls were few,
Scarce on the few-cabined prairies;
Found by a weary search;
Years when men went searching—
Searching, and finding, they wooed them.

So were searching, and searching,
Now on their westward way,
Out to their new-bought eighties,
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance,—
They, the Swinkers, three brothers,
First come to Quarryford.
Ah, and searching proved finding;
Yes, and finding, they wooed;
Yes, and wooing, they said so.
Ah, but the wooer's path,

Even the path of the favored,—
No, it is seldom the straightest!

Minded to press their wooing,
Soon they found their chance,
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie;
All at that memorable meal,
After their very first supper,
After the boat-crew had left,
Mother remained in the kitchen.
Ah, and the friendly chats
Never could find an ending.
Vance could not part from Maud,
Vince from Madge not sever,
Vernie from Millie not wrest him!

So, and before they thought it,
Chatting, they left the room;
Passed through the eating-room doorway,
Into the evening air;
Strolled in the pleasant coolness,
Aimless among the trees,
Down to the northern roadway,
Far, they knew not how far;
Vance with Maud beside him;
Vince with Madge at his side;
Vernie with Millie beside him;
Strolling, and chatting, and laughing.

So, in the silent forest,
After leaving the house,

Strolled and chatted these six, now;
Heard not the whip-poor-will's song,
Heard not the clamorous hoot-owl,
Heard not the night-bird's calls.
No; they were getting acquainted,
Telling each other their lives,
Rapt on the fateful learning
Wooing must feed upon:
Plainly, without concealing,
Turn-about giving and taking.

"So you are twenty-four then,
And you have made this plan,
Brought your brothers to us here,"
Pondered Maud to Vance.
"Yes, we divided the money,
All that Father had left;
Came here to settle and live here,
Came here to hunt for a home."
Vance helped down the hillside
Her steps to the northward road;
Gently continued: "My hunting—
Searching, is ended in you now."

Maud strolled on in silence;
Vance strolled on at her side,
Still repeating his purpose,
"Maud, will you share my home?"
Still they strolled on in silence,
Waiting for answer, and—words.
"Maud, will you share it?" he touched her

Gently, and took her hand.
"No," she said, and withdrew it.
Onward they strolled again;
Onward, but no great distance;
Silent, they soon turned homeward.

Meanwhile, still in the forest,
Lingered Vince and Madge;
"Twenty-three is your age, then;
Yet you have oxen and land,
Besides a plow, to support you,"
Practical Madge remarked.
"Not to support you also?"
Vince took Madge by the arm,
Helped her down the hillside.
"Cannot tell you now,"
Madge postponed her answer,
And on the road they turned homeward.

Likewise, but down on the highway,
Vernie and Millie came home.
"Twenty-one are you only,
Sprightly Millie began,
"And so rich already?"
"Millie—could—you not add—
Add yourself to my riches,
Make me richer than all?"
Vernie half-sighed at her ear then.
"I cannot," Millie sighed,
Millie pleaded forgiveness;
Homeward they strolled in silence.

So they came back to the cabin,
Scantily chatting, and low;
Cheerful not, as before this;
Laughing not as before.
"Oh, yes; must have forgot you,"
Quimby the Swinkers joked;
Showed them his quarrymen three then;
Sat, and continued his tale.
Never would chatting and laughing
Flourish so well with these six;
Even the daughters were silent,
Wordless, drew back to their mother.

"Lively chaps," laughed Jack then,
Dropping that night on his bed,
Back in the quarrymen's bed-room,
"But they got mittens like ours."
"Likely girls," growled Vance then,
Closing the bed-room door,
Off in the company bed-room,
"Blame them never so much:
One is mine; I know it,
And I will know who she is."
"Madge is mine," claimed Vince then;
"Mine!—or it's Maud," cried Vernie.

So they contended, and labored,
Toiled in the days that came;
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie,
Toiled for their homes, and—their wives?
Yes, but their courage to woo them

Lay in their hearts asleep;
Slept, while the grass of the prairie
Fell to their swinging scythes;
Dreamed, while the matted greensward
Yielded to ox and plow;
Hoped, while they lived at the cabin,
Near Maud, Madge, and Millie.

Ah, but how long could their courage
Soundly sleep, dream, and hope,
Near Maud, Madge, and Millie,—
Roused by their laughter and chats?
How could it help but wake them,
How could it help but grow,
When, at their cabin-raising,
Quimby helped them so much,—
Half gave them logs as presents,
Lent them his ferry-boat;
Mother and daughters so kindly
Gave them a bounteous feasting?

Lo! and the forest listened,
Once at the twilight hour;
Listened with keenest sharpness,
For they were sweet and low;
Low were the words that were spoken;
So low that scarce you could hear,
Spoken by Vance, Vince, and Vernie;
Millie, and Madge, and Maud;
Spoken by Vance to Madge now;
Spoken by Vince to Maud;

Spoken by Vernie to Millie;
Each two alone in the forest.

Here strolled Vernie and Millie,
Chatting in tones so low,
Each absorbed in his future,
A future all his own;
Futures that could not be common:
"I am so young and so wee;
Oh, for a tall, brave settler!"
Laughed out Millie at last,
Yet how much in earnest!
"Quick of temper, and acts,
How I long for my equal!"
Vernie returned in answer.

There walked Vince and Maud now;
Mated as ill and wrong,
Mated like Vernie and Millie,
Speaking as lonely as they.
Ever came Vince's firm accents;
Ever came Maud's sharp words:
"Need some one to unbend me—
My hard mind to control,"
That was Vince's expression.
"Yes, I want some one,—
One to check my quickness!"
That was Maud's keen purpose.

Yonder stood by each other,
Chatting, Vance and Madge.

Now and again, through the silence,
Darted the words of Vance;
Stole some words of Madge's.
"Well, but I have a home,
And I want someone to share it;
There, that cabin is mine—
Vernie and Vince will build yet,"
Pleaded the voice of Vance.
"Yes, but I want an equal
That fights me," Madge replied him—

"Not happy yet, I reckon,"
Muttered Jack once more,
When they returned to the cabin,
Saw them so quiet again—
Ah, such a clear understanding,
Knowledge of greatest need,—
Oh, so far the fulfilment,
Fulfilment of fondest hopes!
Days, and days of toiling,
Dreaming, and hoping, and fear:
Search of the one that was needed—
Dragged, and dragged on, for the lovers.

Peace, Oh, peace for the heartache,
Heartache of all these days!
That was the cry of these lovers,—
Treasure they could not lift:
Sought it again in the forest,
Once in the autumn air,
All in the tinted silence,

Silence of turning leaves;
Sought it in murmuring voices,
Laughter, and chatting, so warm;
Finding themselves in each other,
All the world forgetting!

Vance was walking with Millie;
Vince was strolling with Madge;
Vernie was roving with Maud now;
Blessed by the silence around,
Blessed by ease from their heartaches,
Blessed by the forest peace.
Ah, and the words that were spoken,
Who, yes, who can tell?
Scarce could the silence perceive them:
Low, and so dear, and so sweet!
Yes, they had found themselves now,
Found themselves in each other.

"Boys, I guess we're finished,"
Sighed big-hearted Jack,
When they returned to the cabin,
Closely locking arms.
"Father, your blessing," the lovers
Kneeled at Quimby's feet.
Quite overcome with emotion,
Quimby held out his hands,
Trembling said: "God—God bless you."
And there was shaking of hands,
Even the quarry-hands joining;
"Came by it honest," Jack faltered.

First my tale had told of
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Then my tale had told of
Vance, and Vince, and Vernie.
Now of Millie and Vance;
Again of Vince and Madge;
Then of Maud and Vernie;
These my tale has told of:
Maud, and Madge, and Millie;
Vernie, and Vince, and Vance;
Vance, and Vernie, and Vince;
Maud, and Madge, and Millie.

Spray Two of the Poetic Nosegay

Whisperings of My Fancy

FOREPLAY

When My Fancy Spoke

In loveless moment recently,
  When with divided mind,
My ancient songs had come to me
  So crude and unconfined,

A touch that thrilled me through and through,
  From out the dark around
The high back of my settle, flew
  From shoulder down to ground,—

Filled me with pacified desire:
  I knew, My Fancy spoke.
I glanced not round with startled fire,—
  Her heart was still the same!

I felt My Fancy's breath, who bent
  With kindness over me,
Upon my ear with music sent
  Her words before. And She:—

"What was it thou didst sing before?"
  I started at her voice,—
A harmony not heard of yore,
  When whispers were her choice.

"That voice!—Thy voice!" was all I caught
  Up from my flooded heart.
"My voice didst thou sing o'er, when naught
  Of it thou heardst, and start

"Thou didst at it, a twinkling back?"
  She spoke all to my bliss;
I said: "I started for the lack
  Of it so long ere this."

And She: "So thou didst miss it?"—"Yea;
  And why didst thou not let
Me feel its music till this day,
  And only whispers set

"My erring voice aright?" I dared.
  And she spoke motherly:
"In whispers I my thoughts declared,
  That I might temper thee!"

"Mightst temper me?" repeated I;
  "And why so rare and few
Thy words?" "To try and test thee by,"
  Laconic came my clew.

"Test how?" I marveled unconvinced.
  And kind My Francy spoke;
"I tempted thee, if thou unwinced
  My whispers heed no joke,

"And follow out my biddings all,
To letter and to dot;
My self resolved, that if thou fall,
I even whisper not;

"But if thou heed, that thou shouldst hear
My voice, and be repaid."
Her music ceased, and pause of fear
Came over me, and preyed

Upon my words; but I ennerved
At last snatched it away,
And said, "I tried at least unswerved
To sing as thou didst say."

Then She: "And now I let thee know
My voice." And I, in doubt,—
"As my reward?" And She: "'Tis so."
"I cannot mete it out,"

"'Tis undeserved," I soon declined.
But She replied: "What for
Else did I come? What seized my mind?
But to reward thee more?"

And I, enthralled: "To let me feel
Thy voice through flesh and soul!"
And She with calmness: "Give my seal!—
And in what further role?"

And I: "I may not guess." And She,
In earnest tone: "Then hark,
What my demand from thee might be."
I: "Speak; my mind is dark."

And She, in selfsame tone: "I heard
Thee sing, and I am pleased.
Thy revelation day hath stirred,
A new sun now hath seized

"On thy retreating night and dawn,
And thou must rise to meet
Him now. 'Tis time these songs be drawn
Up into booklet neat,

"And covers, binding them to one,
For they are now a whole,
Complete in body that is done,
And in its own true soul.

"All are the Whisperings I breathed
Into thine ear alone,
In thine own words and voice ensheathed,
In phrase and form thine own.

"Now write these songs with thine own hand,
And severally set
In order, as I whispered, planned,
And willed—all thirty—met

"In one; and call them Whisperings
Of me, for such they are,—
Thy work of eight long years, the springs
From three impulses:—Far

"And first, thy boyish longings, dark
And weary-brained wrought out,—
Three years consumed; and then the spark
That Life held to the bout

"Which thou didst give the world, that caused
A three years' fire; and last,
Thy gleanings from the strife that paused
On that abyss which passed

"For thee between both Life and Art,—
And this a three years' war.
Now lay thy work this wise apart:
Becrown the first short score,

"The Whisperings of Night; the next,
The Whisperings at Dawn;
The last, the Whisperings with text
Of Sunrise on the lawn.

"Thus write each song as on the date
Thou wroughtst it down complete
At first, recast into the state
Thy conscience now deems meet,

"But sparingly, as not to bar
That ancient version's sense,
Though faulty it may be, nor mar
Thy history's defense.

"This is my will, and all the law
I came to thee to bring."
Thus spoke My Fancy, stern, with awe
In her sweet voice. But wing

Took soon my fear, and desperate,
I scoffed: "Such rubbish? Nay!"
"It is the rock whereon is set
Thy future building lay,"

Spoke She. And I but muttered: "Spare;
The world will laugh!" "The world
Must be convinced that thou wilt dare
To build thy fortune!" hurled

My Fancy back. "My Fancy, peace;
I am ashamed to write,"
I groaned. And She, without release:
"Thou art not honest quite

"In that, my son! Thou art ashamed
Of that thou lovest most?
Of poet-craft so nobly framed,—
Of me, thy willing boast?

"Hast thou foresworn thine artist-vow?"
I begged: "Another work,
Completer, fairer,—not this now,—
I surely will not shirk!"

"Then is the work of thy whole life
Not all complete," She held.
And I, reflecting long and rife,
"I write what thou hast spelled."

I sought Her eye, but She had gone.
And thus My Fancy sought,
That what She whispered should live on,
And I—refused Her not.

I. WHISPERINGS IN THE NIGHT

(A Boy's Chant to the Flowers Done in Primitive Rime)

We have trees in beauty arrayed,
Both the finer and the staid:—
Lo! the mighty oak-tree,
And its kingly splendor see;
Root is firmly planted in;
Trunk is strong; and beauty's sheen
Decks him over all.

Choose we now the poplar-tree,
And on it the beauty see;
Lo! its queenly splendor ken!
'Neath its shade go wander then;
Hear the musicale alway,—
Jesting of a fairy's lay,—
Ever overhead!

Force has no prevailing here!
Hosts of strength cannot be dear
To a tender heart-string,—
Never bring a poet to sing;
'T must be worthy of beauty well,
For 'tis beauty bids to spell
Words kin to itself.

You have chosen for your queen
The highest type of beauty seen;

Yea, that e'er a mortal hath
Had God's mercy in the path
Of his vision to find, and regard
The angelic image! Never can bard
Praise her fairy blush!

I see your queen before mine eyes;
Cherish it a glad surprise
With her in this world to live,—
Grace as only God can give!—
Blessed to no bounds are those who love
Such beauteous beings from above,—
Joy in sorrow is theirs!

That blessed vision comes again:
She is in the morning of her reign!
On her cheek is the blush of health,
On her robe is the glory of wealth.
As a tranquil queen on her throne
Of verdure she queenly rests. Own,
Own, dear Flowers, this Queen!

(That blessed vision comes again)
As once, in the dusk of morn,
When I stole from my bed forlorn,
In nature my mind to calm,
And to list to her morning psalm;
Sought, what I sought all night long,—
List to nature's morning song,
Under the open heavens.

On a happy morn it was,
When I walked along the paths;
When the brown thrush, Robin sweet,
And the oriole, the band did greet
Of the earliest sheen in the east;
When wondrously my eyes did feast
On all dewy nature.

Thus I wandered to the rose,—
Stood there long in dreaming repose,
Looked upon the beauty displayed,
How her foliage throne was swayed
In the breezes, how her flowers
Glittered in their dewy showers,
How their perfume spread!

Ah! who can the merits tell
Of all flowers at a spell?
Thousands, yea, millions are they,—
Lo! and the beautiful things we say
Of each of them, and for each and one
We a pretty tale have spun,—
Heed them living jewels!

From a time of thousand years,—
Came the sages, came the seers;
Since the birth of Mongol-land,
Since pyramids and sphinxes stand;
Through all civilization told,
Through all gorgeous times of old,
Man hath loved the flowers!

Needed companions are you to man!
Hardly has he arrived, he can
Soon perceive your fragrance sweet.
In his youth, everywhere at his feet
Flowers caress him. They adorn
His altar-pledge; and Death's thorn
He hides under flowers!

LACINDA

She dwells toward where
The Rockies rear
Their beauteous snow-clad crowns.
She is now come to see,
As hoary Winter frowns,
How all might fare,—
Her kinsfolk, friends, and—me!
Be welcome here,
Oh, beautiful Lacinda!

Fairer my heart calls thee,
Than Prussian fair, or blue-eyed Greek,—
Such as alone I see
Our own dear land within, and seek,—
A beautiful Lacinda!

The sleepy moon
From back a veil
Of downy clouds arose,
When last with thee I spoke,
And thine, by cheerful glows.

But ah! too soon
That pleasant circle broke!
Yea, mirth will fail,
Sweet, loveliest Lacinda!

Upon my lair
I long lay wake,
With many woes and sighs,
Though thy sweet voice did yet
Rest in my heart, and lies
Your image there:
I cannot e'er forget,
Though parting take,
Dear, angel-like Lacinda!

And barely had
The youngest morn
Upon my sleepless bed
Its softest raylets left,
But that the message spread,
So dire and sad:
Mishap hath thee bereft!
Ah! how forlorn,
My bride-to-be, Lacinda!

Ah, who could see,
That our young love
Would thus be early nipped?
Thy moonlit face, thy press
Of hand, thy words, ne'er stripped
From mine shall be!—

Oh, that me, too, might bless
Thy joy above,
And life were done, Lacinda!

Fairer my heart calls thee,
Than Prussian fair, or blue-eyed Greek,—
Such as I only see
Our own dear land within, and seek,—
A beautiful Lacinda!

OLD YEAR'S EVE

Once more ye speak, ye brazen bells;
At dead of night your clanging spells
Disturb my slumbers deep,
Keep me from restful sleep!

Your sounds inanimate
Know yet the noble art
To speak to human heart:—
Ye solemnize
Life's sad demise,
Ye make our joys sublime.
So, as the Old Year's dying,
The New Year's slowly nighing,
Your twofold strains relate,
Repeat your soulful chime!

I

Ring slowly,
Ring lowly;

With cadence sadly sweet,
The funeral dirge repeat,
And bury him that's dying,
With proper rites, and solemn sighing,
Whose spirit has returned to whence
It lately only came,
And shortly, as a flame,
So swiftly, flickering, fled from hence
Into the darkness, and the past,
Thus showing us how swift, how fast,
How fleeting is our own short life.
Then wrap him fond in linens white
Of gay, and sad rememberance.
Do not forget the flowers of joy,
That make our journey short and light;
Nor do neglect the cypress coy,
That signifies Grief's fruitless strife.

In such array,
With weeping lay,
Bear we away,
And sadly bury him.

Be still,
And turn thy thoughts to God, His will,
His love, who holds the rolling sands,
The world, in His almighty hands!

II

Ring lightly,
Ring sprightly,
As from the boundless sea

Of dark eternity,
The young year comes a-tripping,
Into each heart a drop a-dripping
Of Heaven's hope, and gladdest cheers,
Befraught with glittering gold,—
Our future all untold!
As out of utter dark appears
A radiant, beaming, beckoning light;
Behind, before, no thing in sight;
No man may know from whence it comes,
Nor whither it doth take its way;—
E'en such are all the coming years!
But ring ye wildly on! Ring on,
Ye bells, and sing your welcome gay,
In carols sweet in thought and tone;
As, lo! God's mercy o'er us looms!

And as the same
Ye bells proclaim,
We speak His name,
And enter at the gate.

Be still,
And turn thy thoughts to God, His will,
His love, Who holds the rolling sands,
The world in His almighty hands!

II. WHISPERINGS IN THE DAWNLIGHT

Leon and Helen

Lo! on the distant hills
Lie the gilded clouds asleep,

In the summer day's last glow.
The sun his royal frills
In the liquid tints did steep;
Soft the evening breezes blow.

Here we stand and gaze, gaze and stand,—
It is you, dear Helen, and I your lover true.
Your golden head doth rest
Upon my joyous breast.
Sweetly into mine look now your eyes, the truest blue;
My right hand holds yours,—hand in hand!

Hark, dear, from yonder grove
Hail the lovely, flowing notes
Of the flutelike nightingale.
Oh, naught but truest love
E'er to such a song devotes
Pleas would pierce a heart of mail!

Here we stand and list, list and stand,—
It is you, sweet Helen, and I, your lover true.
My heart, your eyes, prolong
Love's calm, yet mighty song.
Sweetly into mine look now your eyes, the truest blue;
My right hand clasps yours,—hand in hand!

Yea, dear, from yonder dell,
From the blossoming citron-tree,
Comes a sweetly perfumed breeze;

And, dearest, doth foretell,
Omen-like, our future fee,—
When the day us—wedded—sees!

Here we stand, inhale:—happy stand!
'Tis you, dearest Helen, and I, your lover true.
No, sweeting, cast not down
Your eyes, and blushing, frown!
Let me ever look into your eyes, such soul-deep blue;
Thus, I mean,—and—yield to my demand!

WHATEVER IS, IS BEST

Alas! I am a-weary
Of the constant woes of life,
And of a sky so dreary,
Of the never-ending strife.
The sun of joy doth hide his face
Behind the clouds, nor deigns to grace
My piteous day with one bright ray,
To ease my pangs, smooth out my way.

Oh, would I could discover
At this very instant fell
Of woes, a land where hover
Aye the birds of joy, and dwell
To build their nests. On joyous wing
Would I mount you winds that sorrow bring,
And bid adieu to misery's lair,
And seek my home and fortune there!

Oh, Child of Man, didst ever
In thy mournful years thou see,
That after winter never
Came the spring with joy and glee,
And that the heavens never smiled?
Nay, more! Lest we should be beguiled,
All joy by sorrow is oppressed
To teach: Whatever is, is best.

GREATNESS

The year is at the fall,
And nature tendreth you
Her fruits a thousandfold!
'Tis but a little speck of earth,
This vale between the hills,
Enchanted by the sun's retreating ray,
And follows all his changeful cycle's sway,—
A sight oft seen, and old,
That doth oppress, enthrall,
The heart of lowly, selfish measures;
In that to self and others true,
Its own true beauty, and true worth
Doth dawn, and slowly fills
Such heart's recesses with its treasures.

Then go we to yon hill,
That seems so dark before
The sky, and view our vale:
It lies serene, and fair, and gay,
As lands oft seen in dreams,

O'erspread with golden gauze of mellow fall.
The scents and tints of ripeness beck us all
To come and eat, regale
Ourselves in autumn's fill.
Now court the Lens' charming, mild rood:
The scene is large, and near, and o'er
It frisk such beams of light, and play,
As Old Age always seems
To see enshrine the scenes of childhood.

Thus, as the eve of life
For him who is inspired
Draws nigh, he brings his fruit.
He is but a failing man like all
His kin, and wears the dress
Of all his fellows. But there is a glow
About him, and a sparkling, and a flow
Of wondrous light, which bruit
A sleeping strength for strife
With mighty, unattempted powers.
And praise is his; he is admired,
With laurels crowned, as comes the fall
Of life; but selfishness
Spreads blackness o'er his fairest flowers.

And when the coming years
By one and one have passed
Into oblivion;
And aged Father Time has led
Us to his snowy peaks,
He holds his glass before our eyes, and lets

Us view the genius from afar, and sets
His greatness on her throne,
And shows how she appears
In Fame's bright hall, and ever vernal;
How glorious his achievements last,
By love and thankfulness e'er fed,
For man's own good,—and speaks
Of her as something of the Eternal.

MY COUNTRY

My Country, can I not be proud of thee?
Put by all worthless boast and vanity,
And love thee for thy own sweet sake—
  As thy great fathers ever did,
  Whose love for thee was never chid?
May not my heart with rapture quake,
  As does the patriot's oft,
  When kindly breezes waft
His country's dear name to his ears,
And he in distant lands it hears?

May not that love increase without alloy,
As for a mother, pure, and never cloy?
May I not bid thy mountains ring
  With one continuous, joyous shout,
  As fling the shepherd boys about
The Alps, when loud their lays they sing?
  And may my love for thee
  Not e'er as ardent be,
As his who bows his head in death,
And gives for thee his last dear breath?

Yea, how can I but sing of thee with pride,
When I see all thy honors at thy side,
When Peace stands smiling at thy gates,
  And Plenty pours her blessings rare
  Upon a land once waste and bare,
My own God-blessed United States!
  And may thou long endure
  As fortunate and pure,
As thy great fathers prayed, and saw,
My proud, beloved America!

MY NATIVE LAND

A Hymn

Happy and prosperous, free and grand,
    Spread ocean to ocean,
        From Mexico's main
        To Canada's plain,
    And far in the Western sea;
    Wherever my flag may be,
    With tender devotion
I call my country, my native land!

Aged but a hundred years art thou;
    Yet riches and glory
        Are thine among lands,
        Spite all their demands!
    And still I could wish the sum
    Of thousands of years to come,
    For patriots hoary
Ever devout to fulfil their vow!

Grand are thy towering, rocky mounts;
And mighty thy rivers,
Thy valleys and plains,
With their fabulous gains
Of rich-golden wheat and corn;
And lakes thy north-woods adorn;
The sunbeam bright quivers
On thy smooth waters, and geyser-founts.

Joyfully sing we thy praises now,
Thy sons and thy daughters;
And earnestly pray,
With jubilant lay,
That thou in His grace might rest,
As hitherto thou wert blessed,—
Who guides through the waters
Perilous, to Whom all dangers bow.

THE LARK OF FEARINGDALE

An Allegorical Legend

"Did ever you hear the tale
Of the Lark of Fearingdale;
Of the lark and her wonderful hymn,
That she sang when the stars grew dim?"

The question was put, they say,
By one who was old and grey,
With so solemn and truthful a mien,
That a lie he could never so screen:

"The City is large and great,
By Sorrow, and Joy, his mate,
And with cheer, and pleasure complete,
In fair Fearingdale seldom you meet.

"Its meadows are green in spring,
And the birds their carols sing,
And the flowers all bloom there bright,
In all tints of the sky's pure light.

"And in season there came a lark,
But none seemed her presence to mark;
And she builded her nest in a nook
Of the mead, by the low-gurgling brook.

"And then, in the morn's first glow,
With music so mellow and low,
The lark with the light would arise,
As a bird from her captors flies.

"Then the townsmen all gazed profound,
As upward her climbing wound;
And such music was shed from the skies,
That they thought of the Lord's Paradise.

"And thus she soared each day,
At the morning's first bright ray,
And the people must wonder and gaze,
And the bird and her song amaze.

"But none did a query make,
Or sought the spell to break,

Nor ever did venture approach,
On her deep haunts to encroach.

"And once were the heavens dark,
But upward still rose the lark;
And the rainstorm came on, and she fell
And a fear came on all, as they tell.

"But at last, on a morning bright,
Rose the lark with loud delight.
But none to this day saw her fall,
And a rapture obscure came on all."

Then the little old man hobbled off
Down the street, with a meaning laugh,
And a sly, funny wink in his eye,
And left me pondering why.

"Oh, Bird of Hope, that greets
From Heaven's sunlit streets!"
It seized me like a gale,
" 'Tis thou, that's the soul of the tale!"

IOWA

First be thy praises, my Iowa, sung,—
Blithely, as ne'er o'er thy prairies they rung!
Motherly State of my birth and my choice;
State in whose welfare thy children rejoice!
Quite from the Father of Waters' bright gleam
Far to Missouri's fair glistening stream,

Rustle the cornfields in choruses grand:
Iowa, Iowa, beautiful land!

Thrilled by a rapture that never quite stills,
Leaps up my heart, in the sight of thy hills,
Dotted with kine that contentedly graze,
Wide on thy pastures, midst grain and midst maize!
Plenteous art thou, my Iowa, blessed,
Even as no other state of the West!
Laughingly whisper thy grainfields so bland:
Iowa, Iowa, beautiful land!

True are thy children to thee, their old home,
Where in their childhood they erstwhile did roam;
True are thy kin, who abide now in thee,
Citizens happy, contented, and free:
Prizing their liberties higher than gain,
Striving at any cost these to maintain;
Evermore cheers thee thy patriot band;
Iowa, Iowa, beautiful land!

AN ELEGY ON MY OLD HOME

(Written on the tearing down and rebuilding of my birthplace in the spring of 1904)

Fate has run a varied course with me,
Since my last farewell I took of thee,
To this moment, as my eyes now roam
Over the field to thee, my dear old home.

Ah, that I must see thee fall apart!
Never shall I without a wounded heart,
Think of thee, that art no more,—
Dearer dwells thy image than before.

Never, Oh, never shall I so be led,
To forget thy sacred form, o'ershed
By the pleasant sunshine, or with rays
That my memory spreads, in gloomy days.

Gladly did I leave thee for the South,
For the land of sunshine, where nor drouth,
Nor the winter's cold would penetrate,—
Flowers spring's sweet tale all year relate.

Ah, but short and fleeting were my joys,
In the land of glee, for Death, alloys
All our pleasures, took away from me
Mother dear to God's own Blessed and Free.

And my brother lies beneath the sod,
At her side—beholds the throne of God.
And the pity of my father's kin
Called us back; as parents took us in.

And though short the years that after passed,
We again upon the world were cast.—
After wandering here and there alone,
Dawned thy view, for all else to atone!

Old and weather-worn art thou, I see,—
Still my heart leaps up at sight of thee!

Glories thankful in the joys were once,
And the griefs, thy memories ensconce.

Even while I gaze thou fallest away,
As an ancient tree from long decay,—
Yielding to the common law of things,
Ere the Doomsday Angel's trumpet rings.

Even while I gaze, the groundwork new,
And the beams and timbers strong and true,—
Yea, the very walls and roof arise,—
All in turn and place,—in glad surprise!

Thus the builders wrought a mansion good,
Where my dear old lowly home once stood,
In whose walls home's blessedness will reign,—
Newly bloom, and henceforth will remain.

Thus the Old and Passed must constant yield
To the scythe of time's incessant wield,—
On the very groundwork of the Old,
Doth the New its better things unfold.

Time is short, and Life is fleeting; aye,
And I lay all empty phantoms by,
So that when my life in ruin lies,
For me rise the mansions of the skies.

A CHILD'S SWEET CALL

I am resting in the summer-scented grass,
And slow before my troubled spirit pass
  The scenes of former years,
  With all their hopes and fears.

And as I dream of things both bright and drear,
A child's sweet call of "Mama!" rings out clear,—
So happy, blithe, and free,—
Across the field to me!

Oh, time was once when I could call that name!
But long, long years since then are past reclaim;
Still, bright their scenes will stay,
As in that distant day:

That long sickness, the sanguine hopes we shared,
The sudden shock that Death's dread visit bared,
The death-bells' solemn peal,
That speak as if they feel;

The weeping, and the quietness that reigned,
The soft white shroud, the casket sorrow-stained,
The bearers of the pall,
The still, sad rites, and all:—

The sombre train that bore that gloomy day
My mother slow and solemnly away,
The mound they bade arise
Beneath the South's fair skies.

Though I beyond life's noisome troubles be,
These scenes of grief can never quite from me flee;
Though they will never restore,
They oft return once more.

But child—dear child, repeat your call again!
It gives my wandering thoughts a happier strain,
To know you happy there,
In home's completeness fair.

THE DANDELION

I

Humblest flower by the wayside!
By the hot and dusty street,
In the pleasant-smiling meadows,
Laughingly dost ever greet,
Oh, golden-visaged dandelion!

Even before the songs of springtime,
Comest thou back to us again,
All thy thousand pleasures bringing
To the luckless sons of men,
Oh, golden-headed dandelion!

Turnest the meadows bright and golden,
With thy ever-gladdening smile;
Makest them aye an El Dorado,
All our sorrows to beguile,
Oh, golden-tempered dandelion!

Looking on thy sunny features,
Who is he would not be glad,
Could resist thy joyous sunbeams,
Which thy bright eyes ever had,
Oh, golden-eyed dandelion!

Oh, the beauty that thy Maker,
Humblest flower, placed in thee,
That can touch the human spirit,
That the soul of man can see,—
Oh, golden-hearted dandelion!

Oh, the gladness thou dost bring us,
Smothering oft the heavy sigh;
Oft thy gold so pure remindeth
Of the golden streets on high,
Oh, gold-incarnate dandelion!

II

When the evening shades are falling,
And the sun has gone away,
Close thy sleepy eyelids softly,
Sleepest thou to the break of day,
Oh, ever hopeful dandelion!

Though the day be hot and sultry,
And the dust lie on thy face,
Yet, through all its darkness smiling,
Shines thy lasting sunny grace,
Oh, ever cheerful dandelion!

When at last 'tis autumn coming,
For thy future home and stay,
Makest ready, and art waiting,—
Sailest at last in clouds away,
Oh, ever happy dandelion!

Let us learn the task thou settest,
Keeping only what is good,
Bar our thoughts and deeds to darkness,
Banish what is base and rude,
Oh, ever faithful dandelion!

When the heat of life oppresses,
And the veils of sorrow dim
All our vision, hopefulness shall
Ever brightly through them gleam,
Oh, ever blessed dandelion!

When the shades of life are closing
All about us at the end,
We shall on the breath of Heaven,
Like thee, joyous upward tend,
Oh, ever inspiring dandelion!

THE RIVER OF MUSIC

Prelude

Music, gentle Maiden,
Like a Ruth in Israel's land,
Thou that speakest the language of the soul!
Through thy varied mazes echo, roll,
Accents sweetly laden
With thy thousand harmonies
And liquid melodies;
Accents strong and mighty, grand,
Moving with a martial tread,

That recall the pageantry of war with dread;
That destroy its carnage, and its crime,
Make it poetry sublime.

Sounds that tremble, tinkle slowly;
Whisper confidingly, softly, lowly;
Sounds that joyous mount,
Swiftly leap,
Steep upon steep,
As the sparkling of a fount,—
All so rapturous,
And voluptuous;
Sounds that break exultant as the day,
That in joy profound, and restful sleep,
Sweetly flow away.

Notes that wildly rush in song,
As a storm the mountain gorge along;
Notes so wild, impassionate,
That upon thine ear they grate;
Notes replete with anger, hate and ire;
With defiance, grief, despair, desire;
And with love's heart-breaking, and heart-rending fire;
Notes again euphonious,
Harmonious,
And in chorus full and deep,
With a grand, majestic sweep;
Ever the soul inspiring,
Upward, onward firing,
To her rightful goal, untiring;

Notes that speak of endless peace and love,
Sacrifice, humility, forgiveness,
That can truly make us happy, and will bless;
Notes that let us view the golden spires above,—
Thus the choral anthem swells on the air,
Painting visions sweet, and grand, and fair.

I. The Home of Music.

Bare, and dead, and lifeless quite;
Quaint, or queer, or rugged—beautiful or plain;
Darksome, raven-hued, or light;
Tinted, golden-fair or silvery bright;
Rent, and splintered thousand times in twain,
Weird, grotesque, or wild;
Midst mighty gnarled oaks,—
Pines,—spite thousand thunder-strokes,
Still, as once, alive,
All as scarred heroes thrive;
Or mid shady, woody nooks, where mild,
Whispering breezes blow, or smiled
Quivering the sunbeams at play,
Places ever blessed with the beauty of May,
Dreamland-like, all through the day:

This, on barren mountain-side, or hillock green,
Music, is the image of thy home ever seen.
Here thou dwellest in thy golden halls,
Slumberest sweetly in thy silent walls,
Liest in repose,
While thy portals close.

II. The Spring of Music.

Thus, while living, dead thou seemest,
Softly slumberest, sweetly dreamest,
By some happy circumstance,
Ends thy beauteous dream and trance,
And thy gates swing wide.
Thou, whose glories thee adorn,
Now arisest as the roseate morn,
Donned with beauty as a bride.

This, Oh, Music, is thy spring,
Whence thy waters onward sing!
In a tiny stream,
With a joyous gleam,
Lustrous sparkle, and a sunny beam;
Cool and fresh and clear,
Pleasantly thy liquid wavelets veer,
Whispering, murmuring, singing,
Lisping, and happily springing
Over moss-decked stones,
As a crowd of happy little ones,
When it over the step-stones runs,
Over the rocks across the brooks,
Or in sunshine or in shady nooks.

III. The Rill of Music.

Onward, down the steep and rugged mountain-side,
Or adown the gently sloping hill,
Or across the flowery dale,
Or along the smiling vale,

In thy infancy thy waters glide,
Music, as a solitary rill.
With its little crystal feet a-tripping,
And with gladsome frolic skipping,
With the dews of morn and evening dripping;
Through the tall and waving, swishing grass,
Through the beauteous and fragrant flowery mass,
'Neath the richly verdant, over-leaning ferns,
Wind thy softly whispering, silvery turns.

But over rock and stone, or pebble round,
Leapest thou with a merry bound;
Over the rapids, ledges, and abyss,
With a free, and happy, scornful hiss.

IV. The Mountain Stream of Music

But thou gentle, lonely, wandering rill,
Playful little daughter of the stone,
Art not solitary yet,
Nor art long alone;
For thy brothers, one by one,
And thy sisters, to thee run,
Joining hands with thee,
Laughing, shouting merrily,
Running down the mountain-side at will,—
Never has a happier band thus met!

Wildly roaring, rushing,
Gamboling, and leaping, and rushing,
Madly dashing,

Loudly crashing,
Furiously splashing,
And plashing,—
All its members quivering, trembling, quaking;
Faster—faster—faster onward flying, breaking
Into froth and foam and pearly spray;
Ever raving,
Ever violently beating,
Ever corroding, ever eating;
Deeply caving,
With each thud and shock,
Even the very living rock.

This, Oh, Music, is thy mountain stream,
Heard and seen
By the Night-queen,
When she spreads her fairy gleam.

V. The Brook of Music

Thus, O tuneful Maiden, thunder on thy mountain streams,—
Till the lowlands' sunny calm above them gleams;
Quietly, pleasantly dreams,—
Now a placid, silvery brook,
On whose glassy, crystal flood,
Heaven's smiling countenance doth brood:—
Murmuring through woody gloom,
Lapsing where the rushes nod,
Softly gliding through the velvet sod,
'Neath the reedy roof a-babbling;

Little fishes in its waters dabbling,
Winding gayly in and out,
All its eddies, and its whirls about;
Singing where the violets bloom,
Where the blooming willows soft their catkins shook;
Whispering where the dainty wild roses list,
Where thy wavelets by the over-leaning grass are kissed,
Where the leafy boats at anchor ride,
Green and golden side by side.

IV. The River of Music Itself

Sprung from lifeless rock, a crystal spring,
Grown a whispering rill, and roaring mountain stream,
Then a softly singing brook,
Yet thy river, Music, fuller grows,
Stronger, broader, deeper flows,
Even that one might deem
It a chorus grand, which thousands sing,
And which Heavenward its journey took,
Mighty, with a jubilant accord,
Adoration, praise, and love,
Upward to the blue-tinged sky it soared,
That the massive pillars, and the domes thereof,
Over and over again,
Trembled with the joyful strain.

River of Music, thou flowest along,
Singing thy powerful song.

Widely meandering thy way through the land,
With a movement majestic and grand,
With the smile of Heaven on thy bosom bright,
And thy wavelets glittering in the sunny light:
Thus thou flowest through smiling meadows green,
Through the forest deep, and dark, and drear,
Through the barren tracts, both black and blear,
Through brown shrubbery, withered, low, and mean;
Now through regions blessed by Plenty's horn,
Through the tasseled, waving, rustling corn,
Through the drooping fields of golden, heavy-headed grain:
Thus thou coursest through the land amain,
Thou, the hope and life-blood of the plain,
Leaving fruitfulness within thy train.

Under dark, or gloomy skies,
Through the fields, or through the bog,
Underneath the thickly lowering fog,
Shroudlike over thy bosom lies;
Through the raging tempest's gust,
Under winter's blinding crust,
Onward, onward, rolls thy current still,
To the dictates of thy will;—
Placidly, peacefully gliding,
Now pellucid and clear,
Clear as glass,
Through which pass
Fair the sunshine's flood of light,
All illumining thy pebbled footpath bright;

Roaring, foaming, rushing,
There and here,
All thy crystal waters flushing,
All thy smoothly sanded highways hiding
With the redness of thy clay;
Thus, Oh, Music's River, makest thou thy way!

VII. The Ocean of Music

Thus, Oh, Stream of Music, by thy varied, winding course,
Wanderest thou throughout the earth,
From thy high-born mountain source,
From thy rock-bound place of birth,
Under sunshine, and the cloud,
Of this earthly life;
Now amid Life's rejoicings loud,
Now amid its strife,
Under sorrow's darksome shroud;
Wearing now the ermine garb of peace,
Rest, and quietude,
Making music through Life's sylvan solitude,
Gliding through the fields of bountiful increase;
Now apparelled in armor of war,
Meeting the storm of the foe,
Raving the blazing skies under,
Quaking with fear at the loud-crashing thunder,
Fleeting through scenes of woe,
Dost thou with triumph thy victories score!

Thus, Oh, Music's River, flowest thou on,
To thy distant home,

As a child that long did roam
In the wilds, so far astray.
On, and on! through night and day,
Through the mire, and through the loam,
Speakest thou thy motto ever and anon,
While thy constant efforts I may con,
On, on! to where all perfections dawn!

And as the portals of Ocean thou drawest nigh,
Breath of peace comes over thee,
As with rest the pines softly sigh,
When thy troubled face they see.

Then, one battle more!
Yet once more thou burstest into foam,
Breakest into one more desperate roar,
Turbulent with trembling motion!

Yea, but soon 'tis overcome, that threatening potion,
Thou art hale and sound
In eternity's profound,
In the peaceful, cradling, rocking, mighty ocean.

Postlude

Quite departed hath the vision,
With its melodies elysian,
Music, gentle maiden,
Ever sweetly laden
With the bliss of Paradise,
Where the everlasting mansions rise.

There, there thy mother sees,
What never man hath seen,
Nor ever by a mortal heard hath been;
There, where blows the everlasting breeze,
Laden with eternal balm,
Sweetly whispering peace in ever verdant palm.
There, there thy Mother ever resides,
Where so tranquilly, so calm,
Tempest-stricken ship at anchor rides,
Evermore ashore;
Yea, evermore!
Thou art as a Ruth, who gleans
Ears of golden grain among our sorrows;
Whose dread visages thou over-screens,
Teaching us to look for better morrows.
Yea, thou camest down to man,
To this famine-country drear,
To be round him as a sister dear,
As but such a one ever can.
And thou wanderest with him all his ways,
Through his fair, and through his gloomy days;
Sayest, Thy own God is mine,
And my country thine;
Where they bury thee,
Shall my grave beside thee be;
Neither joy nor pain,—
Only Death's dread bain,
Ever shall part us twain.

Music, thou speakest the language of the soul,
As no writ or spoken word can do,

Thou that canst assuage the savage breast,
Canst inspire with the Noble, and the True,
When the bells of sorrow toll,—
How must in the regions of the Blessed,
Ever thy mother's mellifluous strain,
In the peaceful fields without a pain,
At the Lord's right hand,
Where a thousand harpist-angels stand,
Jubilantly flow,
And with sweetness come and go!

A DAY OF DELIGHT

'Tis a peaceful autumn day,
With the freshness of the May,
With the spring-time's low-sung lay,
With the fruit-time's balmy breeze,
And the sunlight's mellow ease.

Though the sky was dank and drear
Yesternight, and far and near
Fell the thunderbolts severe,
Shines today the sun again
On the fields refreshed by rain.

Gayly play the sun's soft beams
On the meadows and the streams;
All the world a-dreaming seems,
Drowsing in the afternoon
Of this ripe day's tranquil boon.

Cloudless is the sky's far blue,
Sleepy landscapes greet your view,
Breezes whisper over you;
From the grasses all around
Comes a lazy, chirping sound.

Oh, you autumn's treasure-trove,
Such a day as all men love,
Blessed are you from above!
Oh, what beauty you reveal,—
Oh, the rapture that I feel!

FAREWELL

'Tis time that we must part,
Our saddest moment now is nigh,
When madly heart from heart
Is torn with deep and heavy sigh;
Oh, woe and pain is me,
But it must be!

Then take this sign,
And make it thine,—
A meek, blue-eyed forget-me-not;
And I will ever to you be true.
But give to me at times one thought,
And I shall ever think of you,—
Forget you not—forget you not!

May Heaven's boundless grace
Be ever with you day and night,

And in your dwelling-place,
And be therein your sun and light:
Oh, let this wish from me
Your solace be!

But fondly, and with pain,
Ask heart and soul at parting time:
Dear, shall we meet again,
When we have strayed from clime to clime?
Oh, make reply to me,—
Let "Yes," it be!

So when alone you stand
On some far distant, lonely shore,
Far, far from homing land,
And there might dwell on things of yore,—
Oh, promise now to me,
Not sad to be!

Then take this sign,
And make it thine,—
A meek, blue-eyed forget-me-not;
And I shall ever to you be true.
But give to me at times one thought,
And I shall ever think of you,—
Forget you not—forget you not!

THE WONDERFUL LAND OF DREAMS

Oh, how sweet 'tis to dream,
In the moon's silvery beam!—

When the soft breeze of summer his arms lays
around me,
To cool and to kiss my cheek;
And the singing of crickets so faintly floats round
me,
From bushes and trees,—so weak,
I could almost fall asleep,
And would never wish to peep,
But hurry to Dreamland away,
And dwell there till break of the day:

"Like a bird on her wing,
I shall haste to that beautiful land,
That tired little children love,
Where the birds always sing,
And the flowers all wait for my hand,
The moon smiles down from above.
Yes, there would I go, and there would I be,—
To the wonderful Land of Dreams take me!"

Take me up from my seat,
Papa dear, at your feet,
And please let your knee be my galloping pony:—
Your little girl sang for you.
With a shout I fly up, and alight on my pony,
The swiftest you ever knew!
Come with us, Oh, come, come fast!
Mother, dear, or you'll be last!
Come, sing us a song that is gay,
To dance with our hearts on our way!

"Like a bird on her wing,
I shall haste to that beautiful land,
That tired little children love,
Where the birds always sing,
And the flowers all wait for my hand,
The moon smiles down from above.
Yes, there would I go, and there would I be,—
To the wonderful Land of Dreams take me!"

Oh, the fun and the joys,
Little girls, little boys!
As my hair from my shoulders flies loose in the breezes,
Oh, look, we outrun the moon!
But I feel, my dear pony, the sweet-smelling breezes,—
We are there, ah, too soon—too soon!
And so now, go feed, my dear,
In the meadows, far and near,
While I in sweet Dreamland take rest,
On Papa's great, kind-loving breast!

"Like a bird on her wing,
I shall—haste to that beautiful land,
That tired—little children—love,
Where the birds always sing,
And the flowers all—wait for my hand,—
The moon—smiles—down from above.
Yes—there would I—go,—and there—would I—be,
To the wonderful—Land—of Dreams—take—me!"

AN EPICURE'S ODE TO AN ORANGE

An idle moment calls thee forth,
By winter evening's dreamy fire,
Thou straying wanderer from the land
Of everlasting spring.
I hold thee now apart and gaze at thee,
With half-closed eye, in joyous reverie:
For well thy face may bring
To me a dream and vision grand,
Of lands where joy knows no desire,
As roars without the boisterous North.

Thy golden face seems still to wear
The southern sun's unaltered smiles,
And fragrant breezes, and the bees,
Are merry round thee still.
And speak! knows not thy heart still all the mirth
Of that far sunlit vale that gave thee birth?
Thou smilest: "Do thy sweet will!
My draught I give for thee to please,
That thou mayest see, and dwell in isles
With peaceful seas, and swooning air."

And as thou offerest thy brimful glass
Of costly sweets, thy perfume mild
Is foretaste of thy bliss to me;
I sip with lingering ease.
I wonder where such vintage gladdened hearts;
I go abroad in groves where never departs
The leaf or bloom from trees;
I lay me down where faint the bee

Hum-drums,—around me flowers up-piled—
Who raps?—'Tis the storm!—All's a dream—alas!

III WHISPERINGS AT SUNRISE

THE BETTER DAY

The better day is yet to dawn!
There is no waning-eyed despair,
Though morning's curtain be undrawn:

The soul was never meant to fare
As meteor that falls at sea,
Its light hissed out, to sink from air

To sunless pit. Nay, come with me,
Who sought, and found, the better day,
Till thy sick soul with mine be free,
And care hath gone hopeless astray.

WINTER AND SPRING

Then sleep, dear Mother Earth, without alarm,
And shield within thy snowy bosom and arm,
Thy baby bloom from chill mishap and harm;

Until the Maiden Spring, wake thine and thee,
With kisses from the South, and smile of glee.
Oh, then bestir thee, Earth,—rejoice with me!

THE WOOING OF TWILIGHT-TIDE

Is twilight-tide not time for rest,
The flower maid that heralds sleep?
She bolts the gates to maddest quest,
In far-off mystic castle-keep?

Why, Tempest, roar, and, Lightning, leap?
Why, scudding clouds, be storm-oppressed?
Is twilight-tide not time for rest,
The flower maid that heralds sleep?

Then woo thou sleep, my Heart, to guest.
Forget the raving wind's wild sweep,
Put by those ghosts thy peace infest,
And give them over to dungeons deep;
Is twilight-tide not time for rest,
The flower maid that heralds sleep?

THE POET'S VESPER SONG

Now come, sweet dreams,
And flit about my burdened head;
Show me your tranquil beauty-gleams;
Come, play this night about my waking-bed.

Make me forget
The day's bewildering cares entire,
Take from my thoughts all weight, and let
Me wake with joy to work and to aspire.

Come, angels fair,
Sent far to earth from beauty's home,
And tell me now what marvels there
Of rest across your care-free ken may roam.

Your ministerings
I need this weary night so much,
You ministers of God! Where springs
Fair Gilead's balm, wherewith my heart to touch?

Where, cool and deep,
Arise the sweets of Jacob's Well—
Oh! but enough from thence, to steep
My lips, I wish far more than I can tell!

Entreat your King,
Sweet dreams, if you are not to yield
To me on clear-sped moonbeam's wing
My Promised Land in Pisgah's dim-seen field.

And in that hour—
That prescient hour—to let you ply
Your magic musings sweet in power,
For me to sing my coming numbers by.

Ah! this my soul
Must feed upon, to keep her life,
To keep her peace when tempests roll,
To struggle upward by when doubt is rife.

I shall be strong,
My heart be besomed pure and sweet—

A bower fit for such a throng
Of beauty-folk in harmony to meet!

Then come, sweet dreams,
And flit about my weary head;
Show me your tranquil beauty-gleams;
Dance me to sleep tonight with airy tread!

TO A BELATED KATYDID

Dreaming of summer still?
Here in October's withering grass,
Where the dead leaves fitfully pass,—
Still wilt have thy will?

Singing as divine,
As if summer were newly come,
Leafy trees were still thy home,—
Oh, for a heart like thine!

PEACE, WHY TARRIEST THOU?

Crimson evening creeps
Over my mossy garden deeps,—
Peace, why tarriest thou?
Lone in my arbor here I wait,
Early, noon, and late!
Peace, why tarriest thou?

All my prayers, I ken,
Never—like doves—shall turn again,—
Peace, why tarriest thou?

Give me my soldier lad once more,
Give him me, O War!—
  Peace, why tarriest thou?

Oh, that I could yield
Daily my life his life to shield!
  Peace, why tarriest thou?
Then could my tears and anguish cease,
And my heart have peace,—
  Peace, why tarriest thou?

TO THE EVENING STAR

Oh, evening star,
In the autumn damp,
Light me thy lamp,
And greet afar!

Thou twilight spark!
The pending gloom
In my soul illume,
And banish the dark.

Oh, heavenly sprite,
Let ever on me
Attendant be
Thy guiding light!

LOVE IN A COTTAGE

When swallows come in May
  Beneath my eaves to build,

With song and wooing-play,
  My heart is sweetly thrilled
With thoughts, my love, of thee,–
Oh, come and live with me!

When in the fall they leave,
  With all their twitter-lore
About my cottage eave,
  That housed their joy before,
I yearn, my love, for thee,—
Oh, come from death to me!

THE LOVER'S PRAYER

Sweet and still as night-fall,
  Come my thoughts of thee,
Like a benediction
  Hovering over me;
As I stand in silence
  In my garden lane,
Pointing where thou dwellest
  Far beyond the plain.

And thy words, returning,
  Steal, as first they stole,—
Coy, endearing music,—
  Through my waiting soul;
Words that made thee happy,
  Spite thy blushing face,
Words that made us tremble
  Sweet in first embrace.

Now, as sleep caresses
  Tenderly thine eyes,
Softly closed in dreaming,
  Till the morning rise,—
Moved by that first tremor,
  Forms my heart a prayer,
For thy tender keeping
  In the dear Lord's care.

LIFE AND I

A Colloquy in Seven Moods of the Flesh, with Prolog, Interlude, and Epilog of the Soul

PROLOG

Youth

That time, meseems,
I was a meteor, lost
On mad career; force-tossed,
Dead mass that gleams.

And yet, at soul,
True fire from mother-sphere:
My will my own, to steer
From pole to pole!

But when with scars
Of flight I woke, and moan,
I was a lonely stone
From foreign stars.

MOOD THE FIRST

The Oracle's Response

One eve in lonely mood,
To Life I raised this cry:
"Oh, gracious motherhood,
Whose very own am I?

"Thou hast not given me
A single living heart,
That dares, in truth, to be
My soul's sweet guiding part,—

"To come with laughing face,
With kiss, with open arms,
With strengthening embrace:
To me thy dearest charms!"

But dim the answer came:
"I gave thee love and art;
Let these thy powers claim,
And dwell with these apart!"

MOOD THE SECOND

Love and Art

And from my window far
I leaned into the world,
Above me, star by star,
When summer's bloom unfurled.

Again I asked my plaint,
For I would not be spurned;
Again that answer faint,
And yet the same, returned.

And I grew lonelier still,
And queried as before:
"Oh, Life, is that thy fill:
Just love and art—naught more?

"Ah, what is art; what, love,
To famished soul like mine?
I crave these far above,
A living heart of thine!"

Then Life: "Do not be wroth
With me! Without these twain,—
Both love and art, in troth,
All else is craved in vain."

MOOD THE THIRD

Love

Then came a whimful breeze
Of freshness from below,
From out the brooding ease,
But solaced not my woe.

And I to Life replied:
"Alas, thy cruel tone!
I cannot choose thee guide;
Must sadly seek mine own.

"How can I love, pray tell,
  When that I most desire
Never yet my lot befell?"
  Then Life, with little fire:

"Yearnest for the good within
  Thy sphere?" And I: "Thou knowst,
I do." And Life: "Then win;
  Hast gained my best and most!"

MOOD THE FOURTH

Art

With sleep, an insect's croon,
  Up from the garden, brushed
Me by; but would as soon,
  It let me be, and hushed.

And I again laid hold
  On Life, with begging grasp:
"Is Love so bare and cold?"
  Life spurned with "Nay!" my gasp.

And I, despaired: "What, then,
  Is art?" With voice of dove,
Life gave me word again:
  "The second thought of love!"

MOOD THE FIFTH

Strife

And brisk, cool summer throbs
  Flapped wing against my cheek,
And ceased; but left me sobs,
  And greater heat, and—weak.

Then I, to Life, once more:
  "What need of art for me,
When none, to labor for,
  Is mine?" And Life: "Pray,—see:—

"Thou longest for the good?"
  And I spake, "Yea!" And Life:
"Thou hast the strength thou should?"
  And I: "'Tis mine,—through strife."

"Then act the good that's thine!"
  Life bade our parley cease.
The stars increased their shine.
  All—all but me had peace!

INTERLUDE

Manhood

Upon a joyless day
  I found the earth
Bloomed up in sudden May,
  Full steeped in mirth!

Then chanced athwart my path
A girlish thing,—
"Ah! which more beauty hath,
Or she, or spring?"

But spring had not that soul,
That lit her smile;
And not her words,—now droll,
Now grave, to beguile.

And May had not the light
I found in her,
And not her language, bright
And sweet to stir!

Soon she was mine, to hold,
To keep fore'er,
To be my loss consoled,
My heart's one care.

And last, as mother of men,
I learned her name;
I found me young again,
But—twilight came.

MOOD THE SIXTH

Solitude

No inharmonious sound
Came to my pausing ear;
Throughout the night's profound,
All blended sweet and clear.

But Life must not forget
My plight, and I required:
"I, doing good, do fret
Apart; is that desired,

"Then I am sick of all!"
Then Life: "Thy mind is aye
A pebble, shut by wall
From every other. Play,—

"Play, then, thy part howe'er
Thou please, thou art the sole,
And lonely witness there;—
There have thy toil, and thole

"That sacred solitude
Of thine own mind, and quit
It not till thou art good
Thyself, and pure, and fit!"

MOOD THE SEVENTH

Resolve

And then the deep dispute
Lived over, I ventured on:
"I may no more refute;
The monkish garb I don

Even now, of secrecy,
And yet my wistful arm
Enfolds but air, spite thee,
And all,—regret,—alarm!"

Then Life replied with heat:
"The good that's thine, go do;
Keep by thy search; repeat
What failed; take hope; be true.

"Then in this quest, the one
Right heart that doth the same,
Shall be all thine!—Is't done?"
And—"Yea"—my answer came.

EPILOG

Age

The summer dawnlight came,
But in my bones was still
The evening's weariness
And weight, that gave distress;
I could not con its will;
It made my spirit lame.

I left my bed of sleep,
Unbolted wide my door,
The rising day to greet,
My wandertask to meet;
I grasped my staff once more,
To wend through vale and steep.

I heard my name! and then,
In trembling joy: "Lay by
Thy staff, and come with me!"
Spake one I could not see,—

And I obeyed—and I
Was—young—forever again!

EARLY SPRING

Last evening's sportive, light-strewn snow
Has flown away.
The cuckoo calls so far, so low,
At rise of day.
Ah, surely, spring is near,—
Sweet spring is near!

A breath of teeming May-day cheer
My soul unshrouds,
And peep of sun laughs at the fear
Of scudding clouds.
Ah, surely, spring is here;
Sweet spring is here!

TRYSTING SIGHS

I

Oh, thou passest so fair,
Though my heart beseech thee,
Into thy dwelling there,
Till my eye can never reach thee!

Oh, that my heart, as my eye,
Only can follow thee after,
Only thy image supply,
Ever forsake thee, content and laughter!

II

Oh, that the deepening night must warn
  Ever my heart to leave thee;
Threaten my eyes, and my arms, in scorn,
  Ever of thee to bereave me!

Oh, that my heart, and eyes, and arms,
  Thee now must uncover,—
Now to the night and her thousand harms,
  Over thee may hover!

III

Heart of my heart, eyes, arms, and kisses,
  Oh, the envious dawn!
How it ever thy presence dismisses,
  When my dreams are withdrawn!

Heart, with its yearning; eyes, with their seeing;
  Arms, with their long embrace;
Kisses, that speak thee my inmost being,—
  Where is thy laughing face?

AFTERPLAY

When My Fancy Commanded

And when my labored hand had traced
  That last, and hopeless word,
My light was tenderly erased
  By hands that never occurred

To my bewildered eye, but whisk
Of air it seemed to be,
That cooled, like summer rain-winds brisk,
My glowing face and me.

A pacified desire from far,
Commingled with my soul,
When presently, from out the bar
Of blackness round, there stole,

Like fervent organ peal, the voice
I knew My Fancy had,
That made my trembling flesh rejoice,
My heart with rapture mad,—

'Twere uncontrollable, I feared!—
And calm My Fancy spoke:
"Peace, peace, my son! When I have cleared
Thine eye, thy dream has woke

"Into fulfillment quite through me,
Thou shalt behold her face
Again," She promised thrillingly,
And touched me for a space

My shoulder, that it pierced me through
And through. But I replied,
With mastery: "Ere this I knew,
Her face were not denied

"To me; but pray, how long a while
Shall I behold,—an hour

Or two, at eventide, her smile
And voice to overpower

"Me tenderly, and then,—depart
From Her again so soon?"
And sweet My Fancy said: "No, heart
Of such fond love, my boon

"Is greater still: Forever then
Thou shalt not leave Her side
Entirely, when thou shalt again
Behold Her." Oh, how wide

I felt my soul unfold for hope,
And joy! And I cried out:
"Oh, haste that day, My Fancy; ope
Its dawnlight portals stout,

And let its sun leap up!" And quick
Spoke She: "Thou hast the means
For this in thine own hands, and brick,
And steel, all willing, leans,

"And toppling, falls before that sun,
Through what thy hand did write."
And I, all unbelief, undone,
Exclaimed: "I am not quite

"So mad, My Fancy!" Curt and plain
My Fancy spoke: "I know
What I have said." And I: "In vain
That giant might didst show,

"Of what I wrote. How can fulfill
My writ such splendid dream?"
My Fancy spoke, and shorter still:
"Publish!" And I: "Oh, stream

"Of overwhelming floods! Thou art
All too severe with me!"
And She: "Then be a lonely heart!"
And I, unmanned, would free

Myself from such necessity,
And said—I scarce knew what—
That I could not obey. But She:
"Thou even tryest not?"

But I could not comply, for all
My heart had failed me. "Must
I act?" I asked. No answer-fall
Has come, that I dare trust,

Unto this day. My Fancy had
Deserted me, and I
Was left to weigh the good and bad
Of our dispute, and—try!

And here I published, and am filled
With hope, that I shall see
That Other,—as My Fancy willed,—
With Her forever shall be.

Spray Three of the Poetic Nosegay

Master Franz Hemsterhuis

(Being the Lay of the Making of an American as Sung in Eight Idyls from Holland)

Idyl One

The Greeting

"Good even, Piet!—How do you fare?
Come in." And Hemsterhuis beamed out
A kindly smile's broadness on him
Who filled the little greeting-hall
With trim dark hair and shaven face,
And furry-coated stature, black
And tall, that was all his; on whom
The table-lamp poured full its light,
And scarce could reach the glossy tiles
Behind him.—

Still in welcome waved
Calm Hemsterhuis his firm-fleshed hand
Into the warm lap of his room,
And ended, smiling still, his wish
With deep-voiced chuckle, of good will
And quiet, hearty gladness made.
And Piet came in with sprightly step,
And Hemsterhuis took heart-felt hold
Of Piet's rough hand, and held, and shook,
With firmness. Piet's round face flushed up

For joy, and he gave answer quick:
"I fare quite modestly, I dare
Say, Master: Thank you." High did lift
With wonder Hemsterhuis his brow,
And jested half-way:

"But your hand
Has freshly toiled with fowling-piece,
Or vermin-spade, I feel.—You fare
But modestly, and did not win
Your shoulder-straps with offices
You paid your country; and such hand
Did not your name of Staatwaard bring
Some glory in, on battlefield?—
That is a stubborn nut for me
To crack, Piet!" chuckled Hemsterhuis
Quite cheerily, and loosed the hand
Of Piet, and closed the oaken door
In haste.

And Piet gave answer quick:
"You have forgotten, Master, what
My first ambition was, I fear,"
Smiled Piet, regretfully.

But bent
On Piet's good ease, now Hemsterhuis
Stooped over the wood-bin for the sticks
Of biggest girth, and tucked them in
Among the plenteous coals and shut
The doors with cheerful clang, and eyed

His bluish tile-stove over with care
And satisfaction. Piet, as if
At long-familiar signal-hint,
Upon that homely sound, shelled out
His stalwart body from his coat,
And felty shoes; and folded straight
His coat upon the sofa near,
With cap and mit beside; and set
The shoes beneath. And Hemsterhuis
Rolled near the stove another chair,
Of leather, bulging brown, and deep
For ease, and beckoned Piet thereto;
And Piet sank in, and crossed his feet.
And Hemsterhuis dropped in his chair,
With wool-worn sheep-skin all lined out,
And mustered Piet's appearance trim:
From broad-cut collar white, and cuffs;
From grayish woolen jacket loose,
Knee-breeches puffed, and stockings snug,
Down to his slippers, shining black,
Oft darting from their buckle-clasps
Thin silver beams back from the lamp.
And Hemsterhuis nodded consent
To Piet's accoutrements, and asked
Thoughtfully:

—"First ambition did
You call it? That needs better term,
And stricter test. What was your aim,
When you took service first?" And calm
Sat Hemsterhuis to wait.—

Idyl Two

Piet Staatwaard

And Piet
Looked frankly up into the eye,
The great brown glance of Hemsterhuis,
That met his fatherly; and Piet
Answered with memory's help:

You know,
Hans,—first of all my fore-fathers,—
Who took the name of Staatwaard first,
Of all Dutch patriots, of whom
We hear in history, and war,
And fame, was once an ardent Gueux,
With Nassau's Louis; and on fire
He was for Dutch repulsion swift
Of Spanish Philip's host;—as told
By old tradition in the house
Of Staatwaard. Then, my next grand-sire
Helped Silent Father William win
Us free from Spain, for this Baltus
Lived out what he believed: 'We need
No foreigner—Can stand alone!'—
Henrik, the third of Staatwaard's line,
Held stoutly: 'What, though free we were!—
We must unite.' And he marched out
With Maurice. But Staatwaard the fourth,
One Moritz felt no fellowship
And faith in Frederick Henry's balk,
Nor William Second's awkwardness;

But saw his country's star rise up
Anew in William Third; believed,
And lived, and shaped this tenet: 'Now
We must build up a government
For Holland.' He was first of us
To speak in high States-General,
To help cast out dread Spain for good,
At Muenster, when the Eighty Years
Of War, in sixteen forty-eight,
Were done. He helped to frame with zeal
The laws, assembled and confirmed
By that great court of three short years
Thereafter. And the fifth Staatwaard,—
Wilhelm by name, my grandfather,—
Loved not the English policy
Of William Third, and not the weak
Home-leaning over to France. He gained
The Council of the Provinces,
And warned aloud: 'Eye not to France
For help, nor England either; else,
When they see fit, they let you squirm
And die. So let us build alone,
Or die alone!' The sixth Staatwaard
Was Fritz, my father; he spoke too,
Here in the Hague, from Council-seat,
And simply called the patriots
To peace again, and yet again,
Till death.—

"And now they have made peace,—
But that is all!—and Holland still

Lies panting for exertion late
Of war, and rage, and carnage, all
Too weak to nurse her weakling brood.
Well-meaning William Fourth has gone
Without much glory. William Fifth
Is worse, for merits well deserved.
The honor of my country called
No longer to my boyish heart:
I tried to labor only for
The glory of my family,
Since Holland then was dead and razed
To me. I joined the army-ranks,
When I had turned my back at last
On dim old Groningen, with all
Her study-books; and was dismissed
But lately honorably. I went,
As I have told you, for the lack
Of other Staatwaards, who could keep
Our name in honor; for I thought,
With boyish willingness to do
Something, my country needed me
Until she gain her strength again;
And I would go and be a stone
In her defensive wall,—for that—
Was all I could be.—Still I hoped
For war like Father William waged,
And Maurice, in the olden days
Of independence, that I might
Lift up again the Staatwaard flag
Of battle, and make over quite
This drowsy, spiritless disgrace

Of peace about us.—Five bare years
I droned away in barracks thus,
And hoped, and waited, but—in vain!—
And now I came down to the Hague
Here, straight to your own house, to talk
To you about my life."

And Piet
Had ended all his lengthy tale,
And waited for the fruiting thought
Of Hemsterhuis, who sat in deep
Deliberation still, and stared
Down to his leathern breeches, sleek
With wear, and on his wooden shoes.

Idyl Three

Fritz Staatwaard

And Hemsterhuis prepared to speak,
To answer Piet's long history,
His right hand ruffling thoughtfully
His long brown hair, as he began,
In kindly voice:
"You read quite bold
Our history, and understand
Your fathers well.—Piet, let me tell
You plain, ambition was the word
For that old aim of yours This bred
The blight of failure in your life
Till now. You had not drawn the stern,
But noble aim your fathers kept,

From out their lives and deeds. You cast
Upon the quiet, self-kept blood
Of all your fathers, that ferment,
Which now Remonstrance leavings brew
Among the student-folk, and drives
Them to believe that war is great,
And peace is bare. You have not learned
The proudest lesson your own race
Of Staatwaard taught you: They did all
For country's sake,—fight, vote, suggest,
Or write their names to treaties. Fame,
And glory for their family,
And selfish honor, touched them not.
Though Franeker and Friesland paused,—
Their native home, and yours, and mine,—
And hung aloof in doubt, they left,
And worked for what they saw not yet,—
That Holland, which has come, and they
Knew well would come at last, though long
They might be dead then. Party-trust
They even cherished not. If king,
Council, and State, and People stood
By Holland, they too, stood by these;
If these deserted Holland, then
They, too, deserted these. Such brave
Giants they were!—I know, 'tis true!—
I knew your father well, Piet; heard
Him even sue for peace, as you
Have told me here; saw him arise
Upon the Council-floor, since I
Am secretary here for it.

His very life was peace, his deed,
His word, his thought. Fritz Staatwaard!—Yes—
How we respected him, and loved
Him, as men love each other, grim
Without, but deep within, and built
On worth of him they love!—Ofttimes
He pleaded with us:

"'Reason, men!—
The patriot's work does change. At first
There is a need of war, to free
Ourselves; then, to defend our rights.
Then, when respect and credit keep
The foe at honest distance, comes
The time to build a government.
And when the border enemy
Rolls jealous eyes upon this fort,
And schemes to undermine,—invades
With pride,—then dawns the day for bold
Defensive front, and punishment.
But when we own our freemen-state,
And proved it by defeat of those
Who envied us, then must we have
Our peace to us alone, as long
As possible.—Men, make we peace,—
Keep peace!—and work, rebuild, and not
Destroy. For peace we need today;
But war, and statesmen's tricks, and thirst
For fame, we need no longer now.
We must restore the broken state,
And for that task we must have peace,—

For peace will bless, and we shall work
And be content. And after peace
Will come culture divine to us,
And teach, and we shall listen.—That,—
That is the Holland we must have!
If we serve Holland thus, and not
Ourselves, our race, or family,
Then we serve men alone, for we
Provide our countrymen a home
Secure, and livelihood, and give
Them leisure that they serve mankind
With culture all their own, of soul,
Of heart, and mind.—Dutch culture!—Then,
My men, our Holland serves the world!'—
So spoke Fritz Staatwaard oftentimes,—
Your father, Piet; and he was right.—
Is it not so?"

And when this surge
Of soul had welled out into hands
And fingertips, in Hemsterhuis,
For gestures that should lay out clear
The meaning of the word, he dwelt
For love, and anxiously in wait,
Upon the troubled face of Piet,
From out whose dark-blue, open eye
All youthful pride had faded now,
And from the rounded cheek, and mouth
With upward curling lip. And Piet
Sat, sunken looks upon the floor
Of brightened oak, some while unvoiced.

Idyl Four

A Gentle Parley

And Piet uplifted slow his glance,
Until it reached the flaxen vest
Of homespun durable that arched
The goodly paunch of Hemsterhuis,
For bold into the Master's eye
He could not look. And Piet gave word
Quite heartless back, about himself:

"Then has the race of Staatwaard lost
Its high originality
In me, its final sprout." But soon
Did Hemsterhuis gainsay him firm:

"No man can be original.—
That rests alone with God, and He
Has set each man into the time
And work he wisely wished; and then,
When man has understood this hint
Divine, and molded it to thought,
And word, and deed, his brothers say,
Man is original!—No, Piet,
Each Staatwaard simply grasped his age,
And framed that grasp to word, and act,
And life,—that was their only own,
And that was given them!" But Piet
Made plainer his discouragement,
With lesser vim even than before,
And unuplifted eye:

"But I
Can even not as much as guess
God's hint for me. They found it out
Themselves, but I must err about
To find it: I am lower-born
Than they, and could not win, how sore
I tried." And Hemsterhuis read out
Of Piet's despairing, fitful glance
The voiceless cry for counsel-help
Up from his heart, and spoke with grace,
And softened words for guiding him:

"There is no man who does not have
His teacher and his school, where he
Must learn with toil, despair, and hope.
Your fathers were not different
From all the rest of us, be sure;
You only see their finished lore,
And not the fight they won it by.
Their teachers were the same as yours:
Sometimes, their fellowmen; sometimes,
But little lifeless happenings,
That touched them gently; sometimes too,
Life's sword of grief—life's wine of joy,
That nearly killed the soul, or winged
It into Heaven quite. So you
Are no exception to your sires,
And there will still be some success
Of other kind for you in your
Own life. And what can matter this,
If I, or yet another, give

You words and hands of help, that save
You from your helpless self?" And deep
The eye of Hemsterhuis beamed hope,
And melted into pity mild
For Piet's distress. And Piet gave word
With groping eye, and voice:

"What is
Your teaching, Master Hemsterhuis,
For me?"
But Hemsterhuis sprang up
And hurried, clattering along
The oaken floor his wooden shoes,
Around the oaken table, quick
To free the pressing heat, and swung
The upper double-pane outward
Upon its axis, where the sky
Blue-black leaped into sight, and here
And there great snow-flakes flew, like moths
In summer, anxious for the light,
Clumsily past. And Piet rolled back
His chair from out the stove's sharp heat,
Along the table, with its lamp
Of crystal glass, and high-piled books,
And writing-tools on glass inkstand,
And half-overwritten page, and near
To him, "The Protocol,"—neat-bound
In leather,—"of the Council High
Of State of These United, Free,
And Self-kept Provinces, for this,
The year seventeen sixty-six."

Thus read the golden legend on
That book, the trust of Hemsterhuis,
And voucher for his office.

"That
Was sent to me today, the first
Token of this New Year's to me,"
Smiled Hemsterhuis at Piet's wonder
And interest. And Piet picked up
The folio volume, leafed it through
Its yet unwritten pages, pleased,
And put it by contentedly.

Idyl Five

Master Hemsterhuis

And Hemsterhuis moved quickly back
His chair also, as Piet had done
Brief while before, and sat, and crossed
His knees, and mused at first:

"Yes, yes,—
'Tis quite a privilege for me
To write these empty pages full
Of new-made history of my
Own country, as I see it made.
I love to nurse my little charge,
My secretaryship. It is
No monied gift of state, but gives
Me over-enough to live upon,—
And mine: Five babes and wife and me,

With plain and honest needs, in this,
My debt-free home.—I chose this task
To keep my finger on the pulse
Of state, because I had pressed down
Into the heart of human kind
At quiet Leyden's Academe;
For in the state does mankind's heart
All flower out, and there you see
It rounding out its fruit. The scenes
Are different, the actor's still
The same; we only learn to know
By gaining knowledeg of the scenes
Of life, one after other, till
The play is ended all. This does
The heart yearn for, before the flesh,
In which it lies imbedded, draws
The never-breaking reins still fierce,
And fiercer back, if heart heed not
The mastery of flesh, and yield.
To keep the peace between these two
Ever-warring parts within, I set
About to build a truce for them.
That would be lawful unto both,
And neither part would lose its right
And dignity.

"I sought a scene,
On which these two brave parts were just
And even balanced. But where could
I find this, in the jumbled world?
I found it not within the walls

Of parents, nor of my own home
Alone. There was another scene,
Which I felt strongly I must know,
Besides these two, where all, my heart
Had learned, had needs be rounded out
In full, by that part which the flesh
Could set me as a task. But where
Was then this rounding-out device?
I thought I found it in the school
At Leyden, but my heart was there
But strengthened by the theories
Of intellects, so that I left
The university all heart,
That spurned the flesh, and paid no heed
To it. But prettily the flesh
Soon held me in his hunger grip,
While I had weened I had been made
Of angel-stuff. So I stowed up
Into my heart what there belonged,
And sought to satisfy my flesh
With what my father, and my home,
Could never give me more. Besides,
I sought this, then my greatest prize,
With that same store within my heart
Locked up, and bargained more, and ever,
Until the half of my heart-store
Paid for the whole that flesh could give
To me. In humble terms, I found
That scene in which the heart and flesh
Run half and whole to one full whole:
That was the Council of our State!

There rules the heart, kept whole by mind,
Through patriotism chiefly shown.
This was the half the Council kept,
When it had sold its other half
Of selfish freedom of each state
For just itself.—This tallied plain
With my full half of vanity
I sold to my flesh.—Then the State
Bought with its selfish half the whole
Of its own flesh, the feeding-means
Of all its hungry mouths.—And this
Had been my seeking, theretofore,
And thus my State and I were one.
And I have helped it until now,
And it has helped me too.—

Idyl Six

The Good Teaching

And Piet
Spoke wonder and high honor plain,
In all his face, for Hemsterhuis,
His teacher, masterful and wise,
And all his deep and kindly words.
Almost Piet's parted lips had framed
His great life-question once again,
Not yet quite answered, but in haste
The master drew up in his chair,
And snatched the word from Piet:

"I just
Recall that you have asked me, some
Short while ago tonight, for my
Teaching for you.—I can but look
At your life-path with my own eyes,—
Else I were not honest with you,—
And you must not heed my counsel
Blindly, without conviction tried,
That it is true in your life.—You
Have stored your heart with home-lore sweet
At dear old Franeker; you proved
And tested this by wisdom's lore
You gained at Groningen's great school;
You felt the twinge the flesh gave you—
The same as I—and made your choice
The barrack-life. But quite the half
Of all this gathered lore of heart
Of yours, was family renown,
And your fond pride thereof.—I do
Remember one redeeming part
Of all your selfish aim: You thought
Our Holland needed your defense.
Till she would have her strength again,—
One lucky moment. But you hid,
And smothered soon again, that lump
Of gold, in dross of selfishness.
You failed to sell this useless half
Of your heart-lore to your own flesh.
Therefore, your flesh but paid you half
Of its whole only, for that fourth
Of your lonely redeeming thought,

That you would give of your defense
To Holland, but that you would not
Give over your kinsman-pride. Whereas,
If you had sold to your own flesh
All your life-killing pride, it would
Have given you not life-means just,
But peace of mind with barrack-ways,
Your country's warless love-defense:—
That is honor enough for life
And death! 'Tis honor quite enough
For any Staatwaard, all enough
For you, Piet.—I should say: 'Go back,
Piet, to your barrack-life. Enlist
Again, and leave your olden aim
To flesh to keep forever. Let
Your flesh give up its lacking half
For your all-hurtful fourth, and learn
To be at peace with your own flesh,
And with your soldier-life, and you
Will be content.'—

"When you have made
The peace between the heart and flesh,
And taught your erstwhile quite too proud
And overweening heart justice,
You must not slight that other part,
That other half of priceless lore
Your heart had kept; for you must teach
That half now beauty first.

"You will,
When you are soldier once for all

Again,—as you are even now,
By reason of your kinship brave,
And your own build of mine,—then you
Will suddenly awake some morn
Unto the fact, that your own life
Is beautiful. Then that kept half
Of your heart-lore has found its own.—
How that may be?—

"You know your scenes
Of life,—the home-scene, school-scene, now
The barrack-scene,—your senses could
But severally grasp, and could
But keep in mind, one after one,
The kernel of each scene, when they
Had hulled each kernel out, and call
Back, how they used this. Your home-scene
Was first the shaper of your sense
Five-fold; your school-scene was its guide;
Your barrack-scene its working-place,
Where it has gathered for its use
All manifoldness there, and wrought
A perfect whole; for all the sights,
And hearings, touches, smells and tastes
Of home are with you still. Things seen
And heard at school, sleep still within
Your understanding, but its touch
Is lost, its smells and tastes forgot.
And now the touches, tastes and smells,
So priceless, of your home, have blent
In barrack-life, where these are wed

To sight and hearing of our school.
And where the high and low of life,
The heart-store and the flesh-store,—home's
Chief senses three, the school's chief sense
Twofold,—can live so peacefully
Together, there is beauty's home.
And so your barrack-life, with all
Your former life wrought into one,
Piet, is so beautiful become,
That I can hardly speak it out,
And show you!"

Idyl Seven

The Picture on the Wall

Scarce could Hemsterhuis
Catch breath, so had his matter seized
His mind and speech, and he read quick
Piet's features:

"But you look so mazed,
And unbelieving, wonder-struck,
At me!—I shall make plain my theme
To you at once, and give you there
Upon the wall a picture, fit
For all I said.—There hangs a sketch
In water colors, which I had
A student-friend of mine, who knew
His art the best at Leyden, paint
For me, until he caught the truth
Of its original to match

My liking stern. 'Tis, as you know,
Our Rembrandt's Portrait of Himself.—
There hangs it now and does its work!—
We get at one full glance the man,
As all our senses blend to one
Soft harmony, and we must call
The picture beautiful. But so
We tell but half the story. Why
Is this portrait so beautiful?
Because we grasp so much at once!
Our senses are for grasping much
As possible at once, as one
Five-fingered hand. But this sweet dream
Is lost to them long since through sin,
That jarred such concord out of tune.
Our Master Rembrandt felt this too,
As every artist does. It pained
Him much, I fancy, that his eye
Could not behold himself, his ear
Not tremble at his own love-words,
His hand could not caress his self,
His nostrils feel his dearest meat
Not coming, nor his lips could taste
His rarest drink, and sense all this
At once, but first must teach each sense
Painstaking by itself, to do
Its part, and place these teachings all
Together into one whole thought,
And call that pieced-up thought himself.
But such frail, changing picture he
Could not be pleased with. He would have

It painted; and he painted it.
So Rembrandt wrought a fairer self
Than he knew.—Then he saw at one
Swift glance that Portrait of Himself,
As we do now!—Quick through the gates
Of sight the fuller knowledge rushed
Five-fold,—the sight, the hearing, touch,
And taste and smell, that made the man!—
The leisure-cloak, the corselet steel
And chain, unravished hair, and cap
Of jaunty make and poise, and then—
That face there in the picture's heart!
The face—Eyes, largely made, at rest,
But deep enough to strike the root
Of things!—The ear—what's left of it
For all the hair—full broad, to catch
Notes hidden oft to common ears.—
That nose, long built, and rounded well,
A fitting harp for rarest scents
To play upon!—That mouth, which speaks
What man would speak, but cannot!—'Tis
A towering ideal!——

Piet,
You go and paint your picture so!
Go, paint the soldier for yourself,
As Rembrandt did the painter.—That
Is what I meant, when I told you,
Your barrack-life were beautiful,
Should you go back to it again.—
So all that you have learned till now,

Becomes the ground-wall, whereupon
You are to build your ideal
Of life.
"But when you gather stones
For this high task, I must forewarn
You that you keep you doubly brave,
For you will not be pleased with what
You build, when it is done. Then track
This evil of defect in you
Down to its roots, in sin and death,
And do not give the lie to them,
And all their curse of you, but give
Them back your pride, and they are still,—
Just as you gave your pride to flesh
Before, as likeness of this trade
Now. Then will sin and death give rest
To you, and God perfection free
And true, in Christ. Then is your cup
Of life all filled, and you may sip
Unto the feast's rich end!"—So came
The master's teachings to a close
That breathed a perfect peace for both.

Idyl Eight

The Parting

And Piet Staatwaard stepped up, made whole
By all the teachings Hemsterhuis
Had given him, with manly strength
And frankness standing out in all
His face and form, and gave his hand

To Hemsterhuis, who rose in haste
At Piet's unlooked-for bearing. Piet
Shook warmly, earnestly, and said:
"Thanks, Master Hemsterhuis, you are
Indeed a master!—I shall go
Back to the barrack-life again.—
I have sat spell-bound at your words
Of weight to night, but I cannot
As yet give you their measure heaped
With profit high for me.—But now
I wish you well, for I have drawn
Out far too long my stay even now."
And Piet looked up with great esteem
Into the eye of Hemsterhuis
That spoke its hearty thanks, and on
The lips of Hemsterhuis, that wished
Him well in turn. And Piet sought out
The sofa and enshrined himself
In shoes and coat and mits, against
The outside cold.

And Hemsterhuis
Stood by, with arms crossed thoughtfully
Behind, and watched the deft young hands
Of Piet, and spoke with quiet smile:
"I must go down, and bid my babes
Good night now.—Shall I yet show them
To you?—You have not seen them yet;
I think, for five years, more or less."—
And Piet declined, as best he might:

"I fear, not now, Master, for they
Have all forgotten me, and I
Should fright them now. And this is not
The time to see them.—I have stayed
Too long already now.—When I
Shall come again, I shall delight
To have you show them to me all,
To know them, play with them,—some eve,—
A thing I am quite fond of."—

"Sure,"
The Master caught his word again:
" 'Tis great comfort to play with them.—
There's laughing Wilma, golden-haired,—
Just like her mother!—full of tricks,
In spite of her eleven years.—
Franziska, dark, with quiet smile,
And sober, for her ten short years.
Tiberius, brown-haired, wide-eyed,
The scholar of the family,
Though only eight.—And Bernhard, dark,
A fiery youngster of six years,
With heart of gold.—And Gretchen, black,
With dark-blue eyes, of mischief full,
And only four—the baby!—Piet,
You have not seen her yet!—You must
Come up some eve, and early too,
When all are fresh yet.—Then we'll play
Together,—you, the children, I,
My wife—Elizabeth!—But her
I must not praise, they say, who am

Her husband, for I should but praise
Myself in that!"—

And Hemsterhuis
Ended in one round, heart-born laugh,
And Piet must promise over again.
And over, that he would come, before
He were a soldier once again,
And after that at every leave
Of absence.—

And they bade good night
Each other heartily once more,
And parted for that evening.
Thus left these two the cheery room;
And Piet Staatwaard sought quietly
His lodge, and Hemsterhuis turned down
Into the lap of his home-folks,
The bosom of his family.

Spray Four of the Poetic Nosegay

Moods and Measures of Today

THE ANTIQUITY OF POETRY

When man first prisoned in thy soul with dearth
Of lifeless word; when in the dawn's fresh glow
Of Time he bade thy spirit free sing slow
In moods that filled his heart with stillsome mirth;
Dear Poesy, was that thy hour of birth?—
When David first thy name in rhythmic flow
Spelled out divine; when Homer sweet and low
Thy beauteous crade song intoned for earth?—

Ah, no! Thou wert a long-lived angel fair
When man was young. Alone with God in long
And dim-lit void thou wert, when from His brow
The first mild light beamed out on thee, and air
And earth beneath His hand burst forth in song:
Yea, even ere Space and Time and World, wert Thou.

THE SOUL TO THE SEA

A Persian Ghazal

After the manner of the poet, Hafiz. The poet contemplateth the sea from beneath a clump of oleanders, upon an eminence overlooking a very forest

of flowering jessamines, making the air heavy with their much perfume. It is evening, and the bulbul beginneth his song afar off. The poet is moved to speak:

Ah, thou art not too great, Oh, flashing sea,
For human soul to span, thou plashing sea!
'Tis true, my sluggish body lingers here,
Above thy swishing reeds, my clashing sea.
But over thee, my soul roves on at will,
With airy, swift-sped wing, sail-slashing sea,
On sweet prevision rapt of turrets far
No hand hath builded yet, surge-lashing sea,
And pauses there in bliss untold awhile;
Then seeks her home refreshed! Hull-crashing sea,
Thou canst not touch Nisami's soul with fear;
No, not with all thy might, wreck-dashing sea!—

THE TANNER AND HIS RAID

In years forgotten, by Kenmare river,
That widely seeks the sea,
There lived a crafty master tanner;
A wily man was he.

He bore the doughty name, Fitz-Dermod,
The tanner of Kenmare-town;
And every Munster hovel and hamlet,
Named breathless his renown.

For none drew surer his hefty cross-bow;
He never missed aim his life;
And in all the glorious land of Erin,
He mastered the dance, and the fife.

***

And the morning peeped over the hills with his promise,
And the year was given spring;
But the eye of the master had long been waking,
His ventures long on their wing.

Where the Dermod met, rolling, the waters of Kenmare,
'Twas there his work-shop was laid;
'Neath strong blockade and rough-hewn roofing,
A hundred pits were made.

With a piercing glance of skill and knowledge,
He sounded his menials' work,
And deftly shifted his fearful presence,
Where sluggard fingers lurk.

And testing with eye and hand their product,
"Aha!" with a jolly laugh
Cried he, "'Tis firm, and tough, and solid,
Both horse, and cow, and calf!—

"Well done!—Go, dry 'em.—Must buy us more forage,"
He added with jesting wink;
"The pits are hungry for copse-bark, and skin-pelts,—
A month must fill 'em to brink!"—

And the menials marked that commandment was given,
And nimbler their labors grew,
And they lifted the sheets of leather, and washed them,
And dried them, as tanners do.

***

And when a night like raven's plumage
On Kerry's landscape fell,
Fitz-Dermod's twenty men were mounted,
And waiting in a dell.

And clatter of hoofs from the master's manor
Bade all impatience flee,
For the bold Fitz-Dermod came spurring his charger,
A steed brave, noble, and free!

"To north—Mount Carntual's side!" called the master;—
Each steed on his pitchy back,
Like thunder-cloud of careering blackness,
Bore onward a figure in black;

For every rider was loosely mantled
In jetty cloak and hood;
And broad and high on Fitz-Dermod's forehead,
A twin-pair of ox-horns stood.

Thus onward the raving galop went bounding,
Over moor, and heath, and mead;

Over highland and lowland, through fallow and
cornland,
All careless, without all heed!

And where 'mong his own a sturdy peasant
The distant din could mark,
With mingled fear and joke he resented,
"The Deil must be having a lark."—

And thus in their winged passage, the riders
Flew on, to hoof-beat chime,
Until the steeds in their swiftness slackened,
With the swelling mountain-climb.

Fitz-Dermod suddenly haulted his menials,—
"The place; dismount!" he laughed;
"Your horses and self a mickle o' resting,"
And each from his ale-flask quaffed.

"Now off to the looming forest yonder,
For glowing deadwood quick,
And smear your horses' flanks and frontals,
And streak the flame on thick!

"Then away to yonder heath, where herders
Their cattle in grazing keep!"
The words bore deeds, and a mass of blackness
And fire, with bound and leap,

And whoop, and howl, and maniac's laughter,
Swift down on the shepherds they bore,

And these seized the skirts of flight, from such vision
Of goblins never seen before.

"Aim, cross-bow!—Fifty head must quiver!"
And quick as a flash 'twas done;
"Now bowie-knife, skin!" and the sound of the whetting
Was drowned in the blood it made run.

"No holes in the pelts!" and the strokes were cunning,
And few, and the task was swift;
"Now quick, your hides in solid packets,
And tight to your steed without shift!"

The message was done.—"And the rest to the ravens!"
Fitz-Dermod laughed, over the ale.
"And now to horse!" and with spur and galop,
They leaned toward Kenmare vale.

In silence they followed their flaming leader,
Ten paces ever ahead;
And faster and faster the mountain receded,
As onward, homeward they sped.

And soon, at the cock's first lusty alarum,
They paused at the manor gate,
And their steeds all heaved a whinny of gladness,
And the men sighed, "Luck's our fate!"

LIFE'S EXPLORER

Above the house-tops, blood-red sky;
Below me troop morn's workmen by,
With pick and dinner-pail,
With happy laugh, and noisy chat.—
Oh, I shall be as gay as that,
In my life-work, nor fail!—

I know that where my soul can find
A way to travel on and up,
My body shall not lag behind,
To mince, and sip a sluggard's cup!

Sweet twilight falls now all around,
With silence of all daylight sound,
And time for quiet plot:
Perhaps my love now longs for me.—
Oh, she shall not, when I and she
Together build love's cot!—

I know that where my soul can find
A nook of peace upon the earth,
My body shall not lag behind,
To foster love's regret and dearth!

Unhindered by a vapor's bar,
Beyond me twinkles star by star,
From out the untracked dark:
I wonder what can lie beyond!
Oh, what it be, shall yet be conned
By my immortal spark!—

I know that where my soul can find
Through undiscovered waste a path,
My body shall not lag behind,
To reap despair's weak aftermath!

THE SONG OF THE SEASONS

You sigh: 'Tis Winter, well-a-day!
But you cannot deceive me,
You must at last believe me,
That all the circling year's like May.

You shout: 'Tis Spring, to woods away!
But you've not all the rapture,
My joyful heart does capture;
To me the whole round year's like May.

You gasp: 'Tis Summer, cool me, pray!
Your pain is idle seeming,
While I am soundly dreaming,
That all the changeful year's like May.

You moan: Oh, Autumn, how you slay!
But you are sadly losing
The truth of all my musing,
That even the dying year's like May.

You mourn: The Seasons, what a fray!
But you cannot deceive me,
You must at least believe me,
That all the circling year's like May.

WOOING SLEEP

Sleep, sleep, precious sleep,
Oh, how long
Must I woo thee,
Must I sue thee
In my song;
Sleep, sleep, priceless sleep!

Sleep, sleep, priceless sleep!
Toil is done;
Thou come woo me,
As I sue thee;
I'll be won,
Sleep, sleep, soothing sleep!

Sleep, sleep, soothing sleep!
Thou art near:
As I sued thee,
Thou hast wooed me,—
Thou art here;—
Sleep, sleep, priceless sleep!

APHORISMS

(The Boast of Literature)

How highly honored is the craft
Of literature, when both the shaft
Of holy law, and sweet the balm
Of freedom from this law, with calm,
Are bodied forth so full of might
In that same art our bards indite!

(Our Need)

We need reform, not of the race,
Condition, livelihood, disgrace
Of man, nor other outward part;
We need reform of man's own heart.
Then were the foulest vice-fort stormed,
And all the man were quite reformed.

(Will and Obstinacy)

What man oft calls a noble will,
Is naught but obstinacy still.

(Education)

Great part of education seems
A haze of self-conceited dreams,
That vaunts itself to point the path
For ignorance, with ancient lath
Of much reviling, scourging sharp,
And cruelly unrighteous carp;
And letting still the unseen mist
Of its own ignorance exist.

(Disgrace)

The deepest essence of disgrace
Does more than gossip tongues embrace.

(True Peotry)

True poetry is sunshine gay,
And showers, like an April day,
Commingled with restrained delight
In one spring day, twixt morn and night.

(Freedom)

Man is not free; 'tis only God
Who feels not thralldom's painful prod.

(Reason)

Man's reason is a searching lamp,
The equal pride of saint and scamp,
Until the sun from God's own side
Bedims both man, and lamp, and pride.

(Home)

Home is, whence e'er we strive to roam;
Toward where we strive, when far from home.

(The Zeal for Truth)

Our zeal for truth is mostly naught
But straining proofs for what we caught
Somewhere perchance, and call uncouth
The figment thus produced, the Truth.

(The Modern Man)

The modern man when analyzed,
Is scarce much more than a revised
Edition of the ancient tale
We once had named Old Adam Frail.

(True Art)

True art is life, so runs the phrase;
That ushers artists into praise;

And yet the life of truest art
E'er dwells above, and thrones apart
From life we know so sadly well,
And are content therein to dwell.

(Sweet Charity)

Sweet charity no more denies
Herself entirely now, but buys
Her first, when pleasure-mad, a bit
Of paltry, selfish benefit,
With what she honestly would claim,
From blameless self-denial came;
And next day brings her jaded gift,
A sleepy, blear-eyed making-shift.

(Smoking)

Smoking!—Ah, yes! 'Tis one of those
Queer facts of life, which no one knows
How to remove, how to defend;
Which no complaining seems to mend,
About which hopelessly we can
But wonder why it pleases man.

(Satan)

We blame him recklessly, and much,
For deeds of ours that never touch
His black responsibility
As keen as our own villainy!

(Virgin Birth)

The Master chose the humble means
Of virgin birth, my fancy weens,
To load upon his godly soul
Our human flesh with all its toll
Of death, that contrite lawless birth
Be not debarred from Heaven's mirth.

(Faith)

The true, divinely saving faith
Is not opinion's will-born wraith.
But is a creature made of God,
And given man, as seed to sod.

TREASURES OF LIFE

Why come ye now not near to me,
Oh, work of life, and love, and—God?—
Engross my soul with kindly might,
To make me useful, strong, and good:
Treasures of life, so far, so fair—
Treasures of life, so fair, so far?

Then were I not so lonely-bored;
So useless, weak, and void of faith;
If ye were here, with prizes blest
Of toil, and strength, and hope came forth:
Treasures of life, so fair, so far—
Treasures of life, so far, but fair!—

TO A BEAUTIFUL CHILD

Only once thy childhood face,
In the years far distant now,
Met my startled glance with grace,
Raven-curls and lily-brow,
Child of beauty, only once!

Only once I saw thee, then;
Now they tell me thou art grown,
Art a woman wooed of men.
Thou art seen of me alone,
Child of beauty, only once!

Only once I spied thy soul;
Now I hear that thou art gone.
Only once thy beauty's bowl
Touched my lips and then passed on;
Child of beauty, only once!

Only once, and not again,
Mayhap all my life and death;
Only once I saw thee then,
Quickened by thy beauty's breath,—
Oh, the pity of only once!—

THE BLESSED WATER-OUZEL

Blessed water-ouzel,
They have christened thee.
How I wonder
What thy life may be:

Could I sunder
Thee from mystery,
Blessed water-ouzel!

Go and search thee out,
I can never,
Nor canst thou, I doubt,
Rudely sever
From thy whereabout.

Though I never divine
All thy being,
Yet I know that thine
Is a seeing
That I pray were mine.

Though my body pause
In its going,
Yet my spirit's laws
Lift me, showing
Me to thee—thy cause:—

Blessed water-ouzel,
All thy life is song,
All thy singing,
All thy bird-life long,
Is but flinging
Brook-notes out in throng,
Blessed water-ouzel!

Even before thy birth,
Thou didst tremble

With the rhythmic mirth
Doth resemble
Rippling streams on earth.

In thy mossy nest,
Thou heardst numbers
Bird-like now expressed,
Now in slumbers:
Wonderest, which were best.

Then in fuller youth,
All the limning
And the double truth
Of this hymning
Thou didst learn in sooth:

'Twas thy mother's voice
Now repeated,
How the brooks rejoice;
Now retreated,
For the brook's free choice.

Then thou, too, didst list
To the ripple
Of the waters, twist,
Double, triple
Round the stones they missed.

Perched upon a stone
'Mid this welling,
Thou didst learn to own,

'Mid their telling,
All the waters' tone.

And the water's note
Drew benignly
Music from thy throat,
Tuned so finely
To its own sweet rote.

Now thy song is all—
All thy passion,
How thy rippling call
Thou shalt fashion
To the waterfall.—

Blessed water-ouzel,
Now thy life is told,
Shapen solely
In the perfect mold
Of thy wholly
Tuneful brook, song-souled,
Blessed water-ouzel!

Blessed water-ouzel,
Oh, that my life-lot
Thine had mated;
Had been, crib to cot,
Song-created,—
Fallen where 'tis not,
Blessed, blessed ouzel!

THE RACE OF THE PLODDERS

Hark, Plodders, I'm a fellow-plodder;
We are an ancient race;
We number many famous millions,
Yet dare not show our face.

Our portion is to toil and labor,
And not receive our wage;
To use our strength, and health, and patience,—
Save nothing for old age.

And some of us are just discouraged,
Go round with hanging head,
And desperate a greater number,
And most of us are dead.

This triple D goes with us faithful
To drudgery every morn,
Does munch with us our frugal luncheon,
And sleeps with us till dawn.

Upon the street it is our watchward,
Our emblem on parade,
Our initials on our blistering work-tools,
Our name when bills are paid.

Discouraged-Desperate-Deads they call us,
And that is what we sign;
And these three words they tell us something,—
Our life and work define:

Discouraged means, our heart is wasted,
Because to naught we've come,—
Can't get our rights, our fun, our hobby,
Love, service,—chewing gum!—

And minus heart means minus courage;
For we have tried so long,
Until we tried and tried, and trying,
Found always we were wrong.

Discouraged means that we are weaklings;
How can we be but weak,
If we must always worry—worry,
Be desperate, and meek?—

And Desperate, that speaks us hopeless;
But heart, and courage gone,
And strength and grit and cunning plodders,
What's hope to feed upon?

We hoped for the thrill of airship tumbles,
For the magnate's workless ease,
The luxury of auto crashes,
But never gained one of these.

And hopeless means with us, we're lifeless,
And that means surely, dead;
And that is the end of all our story,
A tale that has lost its head.

'Tis a tale that makes us ask with wonder,—
Of heart, strength, grit bereft;
Without all hope, and life, and backbone,
What have we Plodders left?—

We Plodders, plodding, give our answer,—
It is not hard to bring,—
If everything is taken from us,
We surely have—nothing.

THE PINE TORCH

Dedicated to Laurence C. Jones, Principal of Piney Woods Country Life School, Braxton, Mississippi.

Oh, long neglected race indeed;
Enslaved, too, by a race of pelf;
Then left to grow as rank as weed;
Thou criest now: I'll help myself!

But ah! how few and poor thy goods!
A spare, and dreaming boyish wight,
A lonely cabin in the woods,
A piney torch his only light!

Oh, Pine Torch, what a prophecy
Thou art, of things as yet undone!
I know thy struggling race will see
The wonder of the rising sun;
And even the race once made thee slave
Will rise with thee from its old grave!

THE PENITENT

I strayed alone one eve,
And Mercy at my side.
"Why is it thou dost grieve?"
She asked; and I replied:
"Sweet Hercy, I have sinned."
Said She, with croon of wind:
"Take hope and lift thine eyes!
'Twas I put off my crown
To rend the wrathful skies,
And brought the Savior down."

I drooped alone one day,
Beside me Love divine.
"Why waste thyself away?"
Her eye sought out of mine.
Said I: "I have no hope."—
"Look up, and do not grope!"
She cried: "Throw off this ban,
For I, behold, am She
Who brought the Son of Man,
And killed the Christ for thee!"—

I raved alone one night,
And saving Faith was near.
"Why err about in fright?"
She begged with word and ear.
"Oh, would I could believe,"
I groaned. "Come, do not grieve,
But learn from me," She prayed;

"I wrestle with the Lord,
Like Jacob, unafraid,
And break His Law and Sword!"—

ADORATION:

Methinks, I stand beside the sea,
Sublimely deep and far and wide,
My hands raised up to shelter me
From all its swift, onrushing tide;
And yet I would not flee and call:—
I welcome breakers, flood, and all!

MARRIED:

Oh, what a talisman of joy,
When She is yours, and you are He;
Each parting's but a sweet decoy
For quick return to Home and "She!"

But what a silence 'tis of pain,
When She you left as but a child
Has made your long-time wait in vain,
Her Mother spoke that word, and smiled!

THE GREAT GAP

Here stands a mountain lone and lofty,
A beacon light of God,
Built by Himself upon a rock-bed,
And clothed with fruiting sod.

Yon builds a second Tower of Babel,
But half the height was planned,
And yet o'ertops, they boast, that mountain,
Still gorging brick and sand.

Between, there lies a wondrous wideness,
A great ungainly Gap,
That flouts and mocks all bridging,
By unforseen mishap.—

The point?—That Tower is modern Science,
And Christianity,
That Mountain.—But—those lusty bridgers?
What dupes those mortals be!

THE BEAST-MAN

God's own Christianity
A superstitious mass?—
Rather ancient, seems to me,
For a modern ass!—

Did I see a thankless beast
That now reviles the dugs
Once so willing bade it feast,
Weak, in chucks and glugs?—

Or was this a thankless man,
Who curses now the breast
That nursed him till he talked and ran,
At Godhead's own behest?—

Ah, that must have been a beast-man,
  Who never paused to think,
Such a word belied the priest-man,
  And proved the Missing Link!

THE WISEACRE

  He, the great Who-Is-It,
Somewhere in his laboratory
  Hath received a visit,
Robs old Genesis its glory:—

  Evolution culled us
From the great Unknown and Nameless,
  There for eons lulled us
Deep in cosmic phlegm, all flameless,

  Soul-less, jelly-fish-like,
Cold as snake and toad and lizard;
  Made us bird-like, wish-like;
Robbed us soon of wing and gizzard;

  Shaped us gifted mammals,
Next to us in brutal being—
  What?—Am I in trammels?—
What! A gap in all my seeing?—

  All before was brutal,
Here 'tis all so strange and man-like,
  Sudden, and so futile,
Welling upward—flame-like—fan-like:

Wha-wha—wha-what's that now—
Surely not the soul's reflection?—
No!—My mind, stand pat now:—
We have simply lost connection.—

But that great Who-Is-It,
Yonder in his laboratory,
Had another visit,
Saved old Genesis her glory.

I SEEM LIKE ADAM

I seem like Adam to myself,
Where, in the Book of Books,
He sits upon a grassy shelf,
And watches, weighs, and looks,
How every beast and bird moves by,
And takes its name with friendly eye.

So I, with all the songs that come;
The lays that walk the earth,
The ditties light that buzz and hum,
Those which the slime gave birth,
The rhymes that hiss, and sting, and crawl;
The lines that soar, and jump, and bawl.

Lord God, is this thy poetry?—
Then I strike foul of goal:
I find no help quite meet for me,
In all that beast-like whole:
Oh, help me from my songless self,
Here on Thy lonely greensward shelf!

IMPATIENCE

November fog—
The town a cold, and wet,
Unlovely bog;
Clouds close as they can get
To dayless earth,
And torrent-birth!—

Chill, yellow fog—
Oh, that a lightning-bolt
Of June would jog
In two, with crackling jolt,
Your moody dream,
Before I scream!—

SALEMA AT THE SAVIOR'S TOMB

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.
John 20. 30. 31.

"This is the garden—this the rock wherein
They bedded Him," Salema sighed and paused
Beneath an ancient cedar tree, among
The lillies, jessamines and roses, peered
Through the grove's dusk, and moved again, and sighed:
"Oh, heart, be still!—The sun burst full upon

The tomb—ah! His cold tomb!—and He, the Lord,
Cold, too, within. Oh, my people, what have Ye done?
"But I must steal around this hill,
And find the door.—Oh, God, make thou me pure,
That I may look upon my Saviour's face:
Turn not Thy face from me; deny me not
This boon! He healed me once from grievous ills—
I could not see; I followed Him long days
And nights, and heard and prayed; and I believed
He was thine only Son. But now He's dead,
And we did need Him so.

"I came to pray
To Thee on the Passover Feast, and heard,
He died upon the cross! Oh, why the cross?—
But let me see His face: It must be kind,
Benign, and beautiful, even in death!—
And now I must put off my sandals here,
For this is holy ground.—But I must put
A lily on Thy breast: Thou wilt not scorn
This humble token of my love, I know!—
The stone is rolled away!—Be strong, my soul!—
My prayer fulfils itself: I see His shroud:
Oh, world's great Need, I cannot think Thee dead!—

Ah, me!—He is not here—All naught?— my
prayer—
'Tis not fulfilled?—Oh, leave me not in doubt,
In darkness, God! Oh, let the Sun my soul
Seeks for, arise in me, as nature's sun
This morn arose!— Be Thou my strength, my
hope,
For they have borne away my Lord, and I
Know not where they have laid Him.—
Thou canst not
Forsake Thy maid!—They took away my Lord,
And I know not where they have laid Him,—
God!"

Thus stood Salema weeping at the couch
Of Death, and said her little sentence over
And over, in cadence dolorous, 'mid sobs.—
"Oh, weep not so, Salema: Peace!"—
She knew
Not who it was that spake.—" 'Tis I, for whom
You weep!"

She looked and knew the face which first
Had dawned upon her sightless life.
Joy made
Her heart leap. She faltered: "Hast made my
soul
To see, also, Gracious Redeemer—mine!"

And lo! Salema made the cross she feared
Before, with her own hands upon her breast,

Her eyes in beatific vision rapt
Upon the Risen Lord before her!—
"Peace
Be with you, Salema!" spake He, the Lord,
To her, the simple maiden, and His words
Dripped balmy peace divine into her heart,
From His uplifted, nail-pierced hands.

And still
Salema gazed, in prayerful attitude,
Until He turned away, and vanished quite
Within that Easter garden of the Tomb.
And when all gone, she took the vision blest
With her, to her sandals profane, and out
Into the peaceless world, and home again.

THE SEASONS IN RHYME

The rose has fled,
  The daisies died,
The leaf is shed,
  The birds have hied
With summer's sun:
The year is done.

Daisies dying—
  Roses falling—
Leaves a-flying—
  Birds a-calling
Numb, and dumber,
After summer,

Till the frost has won,
And the year is done.

Oh, the spring's but the daisies' sweet death,
And the summer dishevels the rose,
While old autumn dispels with his breath
All the leaves and the birds as his foes,
Till the beautiful creatures are fled,
And the year with his pleasures is dead.

Oh, how the daises' sweet season is failing;
Yes, and the rose-time is come to its eve.
Why are the leaves and flowers all ailing;
Yes, and the birds all so happy to leave?
Ah, 'tis the wintery blight that they fear,
All the sad end of the year that is here!

THE INDIAN GRAVE

Why liest thou, bold Indian brave,
On such exalted burial bed,
Where prairie grass beneath thee wave,
And sun and storm beat round thy head?
Why sleep on high in blanket's dearth,
And scorn the company of earth?

Methinks, I read thy answer plain:
Thou art a seeker, even though dead;
Though blanket, couch and pyre prove vain,
Thou seekest the Manitou to wed;
Thou offerest thee to all the sky,
And dreamest, groping, "Here am I."

THE ONE NIGHT

Of all the summer moon-lit nights,
That God has given me,
There's one of such becalmed delights,
My heart like yonder tree
Sleeps peaceful in the moon,
Just trembling in its swoon
At moments only, hushed and rare,
With the night winds, when they woo:
'Tis the night so singled out and fair,
The night that gave me *You!*—

THE SEA

Oh, once I deemed thee only calm,
A deep-blue, white-cap laughing scene;
But soon thy lyric brayed a psalm
Of wrath; thy blue was whipped to green;
Thy white-caps lashed to much cold foam,
Heaved up clear from the great whale's home;
Thy smile a monstrous roar!

Oh, oft thou only wert to me
A grayish, aged, wide expanse,
Lost all in fog, far out to lee,
Devoid of any smiling glance.
But now I know thee whole and true:
Thy roar, thy white-caps on the blue,
Thy many-twinkling eye.

RHYMES AND STANZAS

(Rhyme Royal)

Let Greek and Roman weave the charmed length
  Of smooth hexameters; let Pindar build
His stately odes of majesty and strength,
  To sing what kings and courts have deemed
    and willed;
  We, of mild Chaucer's rhyming ilk and guild,
Make bold to tell the selfsame kingly bout
In free-restrained Rhyme Royal hale and stout!

(In Gentle Spenser's Land)

As stalks the hunter stolidly his deer,
  So I pursue the fitting word and rhyme,
The measure that shall mirror deep and clear
  The vision and the thought I deemed sublime,
The melody that marks a dulcet chime
  With all the music waking in my soul,
And searching for a teeming spring-tide clime:
  I found it on the low Parnassan knowl,
In gentle Spenser's Land, and in his stanza's roll.

(The Tail-Rhyme Stanza)

What an ugly, unjust name
For a measure that may claim
  Graceful lilt;
Rhyme that in the fairy realm
Where sits Ariel at the helm,
  May be built.

(Highlanders Homeward Bound)

To oars, men, to oar-locks,
And push ye out to sea;
Mind now your bonny bairns and flocks,
Steer to your own countree!

(Summer Night)

Oh, let the charmed, sadly beauteous moon,
To distant katydid's, and cricket's croon,
Waft me upon the heavenly river soon!

(The Thought of Man)

The thought of man is like a winged seed:
Scarce free o' the pod, it's caught among the weed.

(Witchery)

I thought: Oh, weary winter-time!
More snow and ice and ashen rime
Than southland air and sun;
When clear a blue-bird's bonny trill
Trailed through the town, and with a thrill
Witched gloom and fret to fun!

MILTON'S SELF

How like Milton's very Self
Stands his bright "L'Allergro" still,
And his dark, pretending elf,
"Penseroso," with his fill
Of the joyful pomp and pelf!

This is his own way to write,
As we mortals call the task,
But it seems to be a sprite
That from God's own throne we ask
That has bidden him indite.

We have named them poems quick,
While, as rose's attar rare,
They excel the perfume sick,
Which we often deem so fair,
When it shams so neat a trick.

Like the spring in festive pelf,
He strewed through his lines rich hints
From the lands of imp and elf,
That from all these opal-glints,
Each may make a poem himself!

THE SONG OF THE HEARTH-SMOKE

Safe within the chimney's hollow
I sleep soundly and unseen,
Like the timid fledgeling swallow,
In the quiet summer-sheen.

But in winter I keep busy
All the day and half the night,
Leaping, streaming, whirling dizzy,
Rising straight in pillared hight.

Now I belch a sooty blackness;
Now I trail a gauzy blue;

Now I wave in lazy slackness
Over the chimney, scarce in view:

I keep bright the hearth and ingle,
Keep a chimney corner warm,
For the family to mingle,
For the sparrow in the storm.

Then, through all the night-time lonely,
While the folks forget my keep,
Ghostlike I watch over them only.
Till I, too, must fall asleep;

But when in the morning solemn,
Frost-white, they wake me anew,
I rise like the cloudy column
That the Folk of God once knew;

For while I arise in splendor
Folk will prosper on apace,
And the Lord, my sure Defender,
Keeps them warm within His grace.

MY HOME

"The country round my Home?" you ask—
Well, now
That surely is a question never came
Into my mind before!—How shall I say?
How shall I find the winning, fitting words,
The vivid thought that gives all in a flash?—
I have the trick in hand already!—

Why,
The country near my Home is like a wave
Of ocean, gray, gigantic, seized and stilled,
Solidified to fruitful soil, and caught
Up just when its high crest would break and fall
Again, and now must hover as it is
Forever. This sharp crest draws itself up
Beneath our northern star; then falls, long-drawn,
In pasture-slopes, marked off with hedge-row lines,
And dim fence-tracings, to the rising sun,
And far to set of sun; then hollows out
A cradle, toward the noonday sun, and breaks
Into unnumbered billows far beyond.

Within this five-mile cradle now, there lies,
Scarce half the distance south, my native town,
And to the skirts of this clings close my Home,
With view to east, and wide outlook to west,
And dim perception of that distant hill:
This is the bird-seen country of my Home!

A BALLAD OF NINETEEN-NOW

With Apologies to Crittenden Marriott, and his story, "The Making of a Man," in Woman's Magazine, April, 1914.

The knights and ladies of old are forgot,
And their wooing and chivalrous vow;

And the cavalier, with his seranade,
  Seems foolish in nineteen-now.

'Tis an afternoon in mighty New York,
  And two are courting at tea;
A pretty and rich Miss Kenton, the one;
  A Mister Newton, he.

(For there is neither knight nor lady here,
  Nor wooing with serenade,
But simply a man and a girl at tea,
  Where a marriage-proposal was made.)

"And so you want me to marry *you*,"
  She replied; "indeed, I won't!"
"When every gossip expects you to,"
  Mister Newton started, "you don't?"

"Oh, Will—Will—Will, why don't you be
  A really, truly Man?"
Miss Kenton put him as light as she might
  With her voice beneath her ban.

But didn't he see the quivering hand
  That tinkled the egg-shell cup
Against its mate on the taboret,
  And quickly her head propped up?

"What sort of a chap is your Man, my Dear?
  Am I not as good as the rest?"
"Why, surely, as good as the rest: That's it!
  But I never can call you best!"

"Pray, what do you call your best, true man;
  Why cannot I be the one?"
"You're wasting your money, your time, your life,
  And call it one round of fun!"

"I—I must have offended you—what can I do
  To right it?"—He wanted her hand,
But she snatched it back, and retorted, "Do?"
  "Go, do what a Man might have planned!"

Oh, the knights and ladies of old are forgot,
  And their wooing, and tender vow;
And the cavalier and his serenade
  Seem weakly in nineteen-now!

So Newton dashed out, with a sting in his heart,
  A twit from the tongue of a girl,
To become—to become what he thought he was,
  A Man!—in life's mad whirl.

But ere young Newton had fled the house,
  In hurried the maid with grace,
And announced his friend Wilkes, at the telephone:
  'Twas a very important case.

And Newton begged leave, and attended the call,
  And returned with a promising dash:
"I have it!—the gift of poverty—
  Amalgamate Steel went to smash!"

And they offered him tips on the stocks galore,
And many a sinecure,
Both crony, and chum, and clubman, and girl,
But he chose him a far-away tour:

He thought of a half-forgotten course
In the technics of iron and steel,
And of Pittsburgh, the Smoky City, who nursed
Such failures, as he, to weal.

And Oh, he was seized with a madness for work,
And calloused his hands in the mills,
Where the steel was hammered, and pounded, and drilled,
And his pay was near-gulped by his bills!

But still in the din, with his scant-earned wage,
His fancy turned to Her,
To Her he could never yet prove his worth,
Nor truly his love aver.

And still, like passenger pigeons fleet,
The letters sped to and fro,
And she cheered him on in his work, when he told
Her often the gains he could show;

Till once, when his captain was hurt in the shops,
Young Newton was given his place.—
And what is this he finds in the files?
A letter from his—Grace:

"The mill you are running, today changed hands,
And the shops and machines are mine;
But mark you well young Newton there,
And promote him up the line."—

And who is it darkens the door, on the spot?
"Miss Kenton—sure, as I live!"
And he offered his moneyed mistress his chair,
And gasped—"All I can give!"

"I can only thank—thank—thank you, girl;
It's 'most too sudden for me;
But I remember—thank the Lord!
I have it to show you—See?

"The Atlas Steel Works want me now!
Or—Grace!—Grace, did you do
This, too?" and he flashed her the sheet in despair.
"No! No!" she cried; and he drew

His chair to hers, and pleaded with her:
"I have shown you all I can;
Here's my hands, and the Atlas letter proves
That I have become a *Man*!"

"And now, my darling, can't you love
Me just a little?—Say"—
And she: "I loved you all my life,
And most when I sent you away!"

Yes, the knights and ladies of old are forgot,
And their wooing, and marriage-vow;
And the young cavalier and his serenade
Are needless in nineteen-now!

THE WOODEN HORSE

'Tis dawnlight on the walls of Troy,
And the watchmen are changing their beat;
They are peering down the tents of the Greeks,
Spread far and wide at their feet.

Oh, the farther lights are quiet and dim,
But why do the nearer lights start,
And trail, and stand, and scurry about,
Below, round the campfire's heart?

Full soon enough the answer came,
When the longed-for sun looked down
On man-high trucks, with man-high wheels,
Four trucks on the road to town.

And axes were spitting chips all round,
And four gigantic beams
Heaved up, and swayed in place, on the trucks,
As the slave-gang strains and screams.

So the weeks dragged by, and the watchmen saw
A monstrous body form,
On those four gigantic upright beams,
Could weather any storm!

And the watchman cried: "Can no one tell
What the four-legged beast might be?
Is it pastime—engine—tower—or hoax?
Or is it a mystery?"

But the weeks crept on, and the wonder teased,
And doubled its torturing force,
As the beast grew a tail, and erected a head,
And the watchmen marveled: "A horse!"

Next morn, when the sun rolled up again,
There stood the monster alone,—
Not a Greek on the plain, not a ship on the shore,—
And they sent to the King on his throne.

But who is he that comes running so fast,
And aims for the city gate?
"King Priam! King Priam, give ear!" he cried,
"I bring you a trick of fate!"

"Oh, Troy, my beloved, trust him not!"
Cried Laocoon, the priest;
But King Priam nodded: "I hear his tale;
Acquaint me with yonder beast."

"Most noble King Priam, 'tis Sinon that speaks,"
The messenger bowed to earth;
"My countrymen left me, the faithless lot,
Like a beggar that's nothing worth;

"They left me here with that wooden horse,—
A stranger alone to starve,
And I ask you for shelter and bed and board,
And with you my fortune to carve.

"I can drop you a hint that avenges me sweet:
You can steal this wooden horse—
'Tis an offering made for Athena's sake,—
And garner its sacred force:

"You can heighten the gates, and wheel it in,
And pull it up to your fane,
And foil the crafty Ulysses whole,
And rob his people their gain."

So the gates were cut higher, amid shouts and song,
And the Horse wheeled in with cheers,
And they pulled it with prayer to the citadel,
And caroused through the night without fears.

But what are the thousand lights round Troy?
The Greeks!—the Greeks are back!—
And what is the din in the streets?—The Greeks!!
They're in the city, alack!

Oh, well for the crafty Ulysses' plan,
For that Wooden Horse, and the men
Within its maw, who opened the gates
For those who turned again!

But alas! for the city—the city of Troy,
  That could not fall by force!
Alack! for the Windy City now,
  That fell by a Wooden Horse!

THE SUN

What art thou, sailing there on high,
  So near the Triune Throne?
Art thou but flaming gas, a lie—
  Inanimate, and alone?

Or art thou a true ancient god,
  But little lower placed,
Than the Unknown, Who bids thee plod
  Daily the heavenly waste?

Ah, no! I sense a meeter tale
  My soul has given birth:
Thou camest from Jehovah!—Hail,
  Arch-angel of our earth!

MY FIRST AEROPLANE

I see it yet, my first-seen aeroplane:
The bird-man whom no danger could deter,
The hushed expectant crowd that brooked no stir,
Their eyes all fixed with nervous hope and strain
Upon the hangar where so long had lain
That strange New Thing unmoved; and then the purr
That lit all eyes with fire; the wilder whirr;
The rise; the flight that eyes pursued in vain!

The aeroplane! I saw, and heard, and felt
Its power, and I was a part of all
I sensed: Thus is it when our dreams come true,
And all their vagueness dim at last must melt
Away before reality, and call
Our spirits to the higher Nebo-view.

ECHOES FROM OLD GREECE

ORPHEUS

Orpheus lifted his eyes to the Muses, and softened his playing,
Wholly winnowed the harsher cadences out of his harp-strings,
Holding lion, and wolf, and mouse spell-bound on their haunches;
Charming, by his lovelier music, the green-wood around him;
Near him, above him, the myriad leaves that quivered before this:
Now they too were listening, pausing in wonderful silence,
Motionless paying their tribute to Orpheus' masterful music.

TO SAPPHO

Still, Oh sweet-lipped Lady of Song, we hear thee
Sing the wooing cadences you intoned us;
We become thy lovers by thousands, bring thee
Many for one lost!

CHORIAMBICS

Choriambics, awake, tread me a tune full of the life of life!
Soft, slow, sample your steps first in the calm start of the sweet review;
Then rush, dart in the mood bright that the sunbeams may reveal in haste;
Calm down, flow to the plane where in the dance all comes to peace and rest.

APPLE-PLUCKING TIME

Rejoice! 'Tis apple-plucking time!
Ripe Autumn's come into the West,
And Indian Summer hums her rhyme.

With pail and hook your ladders climb,
And deft the drooping boughs divest:
Rejoice! 'Tis apple-plucking time!

Oh, spice the feast with laughter's chime,
If wordless, sombre grows your quest,
And Indian Summer hums her rhyme!

And marry, nay, 'tis not a crime
To sprinkle in a tale or jest:
Rejoice! 'Tis apple-plucking time!

And leave not love to pantomime,
If he comes now, a welcome guest,
And Indian Summer hums her rhyme!

Then mingle sweetly age and prime;
Of age his rest, of youth her zest:
Rejoice! 'Tis apple-plucking time,
And Indian Summer hums her rhyme!

THE SONG OF THE SPRING WIND

There's a rollicking sound in the sky,
There's a welcoming call out-o'-doors,
And a bellowing shout of good-bye
To the snow-spitting clouds, as it roars:
'Tis the young, clean wind of spring,
That can whistle and thunder and sing!

What a jerk and a tug at my coat,
What a two-edged tune at my ear,
That I think me a vessel afloat
That is dashed, and is lifted, in fear!
'Tis the young, clean wind of spring,
That can whistle and thunder and sing!

When the leaves are yet nestled away
In their cradles in every tree,
What is it that sounds like the bray
Of a dragon from over the sea?
'Tis the young, clean wind of spring,
That can whistle and thunder and sing!

There's music so wondrously sweet
Out-o'-doors in the sun, in the air,
That can woo, and can win, and retreat,
And can linger beyond compare:
'Tis the young, clean wind of spring,
That can whistle and thunder and sing!

RHYME PLAY

Dawn in Greece

The day is dimly advancing,
And Phoebus' steeds are prancing,
Their silky flanks all glancing
With blue and pink and gold.
His fiery cart is starting,
And over the sky-line darting,
And Night, and Sleep, are departing
From cave and mountain-hold.

Thy Bitter-Sweet, Sweet Smile

Thy bitter-sweet, sweet smile
Is buried in my heart
For all my afterwhile,
And never will depart.

Sometimes it slumbers there,
Calm as a sleeping child;
Then, like a breath of air,
It rouses quick and wild.

That breath, Oh, let it be
My seeing of thy smile;
That sleeping child, to me
The long, dear afterwhile.

Question and Answer

The Lady Moon descends so soon
To her lake-bath this eve,

And we complain, and ask in vain,
  Why she might haste to leave.
Or—if she tried—could she have spied
Us sitting here so out of season,
And guess the reason for our trysting treason?

Birthday-Rime

Only the tenderest
  Wishes have I,
Hoping, thou renderest
  Meetest reply!
Nor is it selfishly
  Much that I ask,
Just that thou elfishly
  Smile on my task!

Clear Weather

He has driven the torn clouds out of the sky;
  He bids them hie and scud;—
The great ones roll as the surging seas,
  In the heavens of blue and blood;
The small ones fly like a dolphin school
  Over the real, dark-blue wave.
And the Sun, how he laughs at their scudding
      fear—
  How bonny they behave!

The Realist

The mountain ash is rarer
  Than the pine-tree on the uplands,
The edelweis is fairer

Than violets in cup-lands;
But him that's not a lover,
What boots the distant treasure?
The pine-tree give me cover,
The violet be my pleasure.

Growth

Oh, lily-bulb, how slow thou breakest thy hull,
And weeks, and weeks but bring thy pale green leaf;
And months, and months but scarce thy budlets cull;
But now I thank thee for thy flower-sheaf!

Chief Eagle Eye

Eagle-Eye, Eagle-Eye,
Come to your eyrie;
Come on your pony now,
Over the prairie!
Eagle-Eye, Eagle-Eye,—
Sad was his falling;
He, on the battle-grounds,
Hears not our calling.

Back to Iowa

On the banks of the winding Iowa, there lies a classic town,
And the temples, gray with learning, and with ivy green and brown,

That arise like some high-castled city high
above the stream,
Call me still, "Oh, turn again!"—resistless as a
dream:
Turn again to Iowa,
Drink again her learned Spa,
It is not as far as clear from here to distant
Panama!
Oh, no, no, Old Iowa,
Just beyond Atalissa,—
'Tis not far and I shall turn again ere long to
Iowa!

Rhyme and Reason

(With apologies to Amanda B. Hall, whose verses, "Piscatorial Philosophy," in Munsey's for April, 1914, suggested these lines.)

I marveled that he would sit at his desk
From sunrise to on-creep of night,
And seemed quite as happy to rhyme with no
luck
As he was when he did make a flight.

I asked him to tell me the why of it all
(And now for his humor I'm climbing)
He said: "While it's fun to catch the great song,
The best fun of all is just here rhyming!"

The Limerick

I longed to perform the neat trick
Of loading a strong limerick,
  But the thing proved a gun
  With a keen eye for fun,
And went off with a terrible kick!

SUMMER MAGIC

I

Oh, sweet is the call of a lark at noon,
When the day is torrid and dusty-brown,
And man and beast in sultry swoon,
In the Middle West, at the edge of a town!

With a flash I am back in the midst of May,
And the heat, and the swoon, is fresh and cool,
As though it were spring, and the making of hay,
And I had a plunge in the swimming pool.

II

I here at the town's near edge,
  I am neighbor to the grass:
Timothy, and reed, and sedge;
  Hung at morn with beads of glass,
Limp at noon with summer's pang,
Perfumed cool at eve with tang.

Deep and careless here I lie
  While my fancy dances whirls,

'Mid the grass, and in the sky,
  Till the beads of glass are pearls,
Sky and clouds are silk and fleece,
And the tang is spice and peace!

I am richer than it seems,
  But my city brother pines:
"Wanted—Grass!" he often dreams,
  'Mid his train, and trolley lines,
'Till I grieve as though I sinned,
Buried here in wealth of Ind.

THE PLAINT OF WORLD-PEACE

Lord God of Sabaoth,
  Who rulest War and Peace,
Oh, give us, give peace-troth,
  And bid all World-War cease;
Lord God of Sabaoth!

I dare not pray to Thee,
  All-wise and Righteous One,
For final victory,
  When all the crime is done,
That Thou wouldst give it me.

Oh, I am humbled low!
  My lips have bitten dust!
I—I am my own foe;
  I let the sickle rust—
Fed wife and babe to woe!

Ah, what is Honor now,
  And Death on Battlefield,
And Patriotic Vow,
  And all Great Words they wield—
The Cause—the Laureled Brow?

Lord God of Sabaoth,
  Who rulest War and Peace,
Oh, give us soon peace-troth,
  And bid all World-War cease;
Lord God of Sabaoth!

Oh, now I see my sins!
  I have un-made the world:
The clouds to Zeppelins,
  The rain to bombs they hurled
Upon the world's bread-bins!

For cornfields, I have sown
  The millioned gun-spears all;
The grain that they have grown,
  It is the dum-dum ball,
With which the corn is mown.

And my own dove I fledged,
  The peace-born aeroplane,
With thunderbolts I edged—
  Oh, I have toiled in vain,
And lost the troth I pledged!

Lord God of Sabaoth,
  Who rulest War and Peace,

Oh, give us now Thy troth,
That all World-War shall cease;
Lord God of Sabaoth!

THE SPIRIT OF THE MIDDLE WEST

Soul of the great Mid-West, arise!
The cultured East, it knows thee not;
The robust West has long forgot;
Reveal thyself unto their eyes!

Become a living, throbbing flesh,
And show thy being as thou art,
Thy shining deeds in every part,
And catch them in thy charmed mesh.

Then mold them thus enmeshed secure
Within thy charms until the day
When they shall fainly plead and say:
"Oh, great Mid-West, we see thy lure!"

Then call aloud unto the East:
"Hail, Mornland, by thy learned grace,
Lo! mine is not the Indian's face;
My soul not that of savage beast!"

Shout, too, unto the self-made West:
"Oh, Eveningland, I am not changed
An academic, far estranged
From thee, and thy beloved quest!

"I am not Eve nor am I Morn;
I am the glorious Noon between;
A part of each, and yet when seen
Complete, a re-birth newly born!

"I grasp within my right the toll
Of Eastern learning, westward turned;
Within my left the brawn that yearned
For light, and shape them one great soul!"

Soul of the great Mid-West, arise!
The cultured East, it knows thee not;
The robust West has long forgot;
Oh, manifest thee to their eyes!

LINES ON HEARING THE POET ALFRED NOYES READ FROM HIS WORKS, AT IOWA CITY, IOWA, JAN. 22, 1914.

Athens of Iowa,
Kind Mother to me,
Oh, how delighted
I hastened to thee;

Hastened to thee,
Out of my work;
How I approved it,
To pause and to shirk;

To welcome a herald
Poetic of Peace,

Bid him enliven
England and Greece!

And then I sat in halls unreal,
So festive and so fair they seemed,
A mansion of the deathless Muses,
Amidst our Western prairies dreamed!

And soon the unassuming Reader,
The youthful Poet entered in,
With one whose toil was teaching beauty,
Who tersely called him our kin.

And then upon the wings of language,
Upon his own poetic tongue,
The Poet set his dead books throbbing
With songs that he alone had sung.

His living voice took me to London,
To London-town in lilac-time,
Showed me the symphony of faces
Swayed by the Barrel-Organ's rhyme.

I was there when the morning wakened
In "Sherwood," when Robin and his thieves
Upon his shivering bugle-summons,
Rose from the dead and mouldering leaves.

I went with the "Forty Singing Seamen,"
Upon their wild, bejeweled trance,
And saw the proud and uppish moderns
Invited to the drunken dance.

I heard and saw from Putney's heather,
"The Highwayman" come riding wild;
His tlot-tlot-tlot! it pierced my being,
His love for Bess, the landlord's child!

Then came I back to him before me:
How earnestly his soul tramped out
"The Wine Press," with its tale of slaughter,
And cry for peace in battle-bout.

Then sank the Reader's voice and message
Into the low, soft tone of song,
How "In the Cool Sweet Eve He Cometh,"
Who bringeth peace for which we long.

Oh, welcome, thou herald
Poetic of Peace,
Thou hast enlivened
England and Greece!

Thus I found thee,
Out of my work,
When I approved it,
To pause and to shirk;

When, Oh, how delighted,
I hastened to thee,
Athens of Iowa,
Kind Mother to me!

THE TRAINS OF DAY AND NIGHT

The trains that pass by day
Are not the trains that pass by night.

The trains of day, the cars of everyday,
They creep slowly, like caterpillars,
Across the prairies of our Middle West laboriously;
Or they glide with smoothness from town to town,
Fretted only by the stops
That come and halt,
Much too frequently;
Or they fly across the continent,
As birds on long swoops near the ground.

But the trains of day
Are not the trains of the night.

The creeping cars of day,
The passenger cars that glide so easily on,
The swiftly flying trains,
Are all too much in the common day.
They are barn-red;
They are coal-stained;
They are dead gray,
In the light of the undimmed sun;
Or dead black,
Beneath the low-hung tent-roof
Of the slow rain;
Beneath the wide-flung cloak
Of the tempest.

The trains of day are halt, are lame;
They must spit and hiss and fume;

They are slaves to the business of day;
Their law is Eternity's;
Their speed is Time's;
But their duty is to stop at stations, to unload, to load;
And then only to obey the higher law of passing on—
Only to stop again soon.

No, the trains of day
Can never be the trains of night.

I THE TRAINS OF DAY

The trains of day,
The cars of the day-time,
The plain-seen trains of the noontide,
Are all—are all unreal.

The Freight

The lumbering, bumping freight,
The passenger train that bears men glidingly on,
In its homy cushions,
The passing flyer that spits gravel bits in my face,
And drives dust into my eyes:—
These are all untrue!

I hear the freight bump, creak, and scream;
I hear the bell ring everlastingly, monotonously;
I hear the engine snort, and grate its steely teeth,
And groan with the pain of giants.

I smell its carrion-breath;
I smell the cesspools
Of the low places of the earth;
I smell the breath of human tombs:—
Awk!—I taste it all!

I see its mogul body—
It is stumpy, and sorely begrimed—monstrous!
I feel its hot anger stinging my face,
Its steamy spirit-arms reaching out to clutch me,
And hurl me into the cesspools
Of the low places of the earth!

The trains of day,
The cars of everyday,
Are all untrue.

The Passenger Train

The train of day,
The passenger train,
Rolls into the station.
The letter of its onward law is broken.
The glory of its speed is dying;
Its choked breath
Shrills away in a swan's song.
Its business begins.

The people alight from the porches
Of their brief, wheeled home.
Some must leave their home town,
And ascend the steps to a home

Forever on wheels,
Forever transitory.
The crowd must gape,
Rude, cruel, unmoved;
The folks must watch,
And long
For him who missed his train of day,
For her who did not come.

All kinds of passengers are swung out
By the black-faced porter,
And alight from this train of day:
She of the embattled colors,—
He, the white-washed sepulcher;
She, the shirt-waisted saleslady;
He, the groomed, ponderous salesman;
She, the capable mother and housewife;
He, the fit head of a family;
Tiny she with lacy dress
Like a folded, drooping lily;
And mite-like Baby Who,
Flower-heart,
Still huddled in motherly petals of infant's clothes.

Ah, if the train of day
Had not been throttled,
And its law not broken,
Its speed not killed,
These homeless people,
These strangers of the road,

Had not been forsaken
By the passenger train of day!

The Flyer

Oh, the flyer of day goes by,
And it wails its warning,
Like a maniac
Who may not stay himself;
And it purrs and whirrs,
And throbs and vibrates,
And whizzes past me,
With a farewell gravel-twit
On my cheek
And whisk of dust in my eyes,—
And is gone!

And I have seen nothing but dead gray and dead
black,
A gigantic, mechanical mole,
That shot onward,
Like a hawk in its swoop near the ground!

The trains of day—of day,
Are all unfaithful.

II THE TRAINS OF NIGHT

The trains of the night, of the night—
The trains of the night-time,
They are true:
The trains of the night are real.

It is night in my town,
Dark night,
And work is rest,
And business is pleasure,
And the din of day
Is quiet—
Is peace.

The Night Freight

It is time for the trains of night
To go by.

The freight of night is coming on.
Its one great eye is awake,
And makes a great white way
In the black darkness.
A trumpet-peal
Warns me to stay my steps.
The rails purr,
The wheels make harmony
In the hymn of motion,
And the clank of machinery chimes in with it,
And the thousand little clicks
Are tinkling of fairy bells
In tune with the great bell.
And the black day-smoke
Is a pillar of fire
(I think by myself)
That guides the freight aright.
The barn-red cars
Move on in a mystical, magical haze,

And the freight of the night is past,
And bids its red adieu.
So passes the freight of night through my town.
It needs no loading, for the freight is all aboard;
It needs no tiresome unloading, for its precious
freight goes on;
Its sugar, coffee, and flour;
Its caraway, myrrh, and dill;
Its wood, and iron, and steel;
Its silver, and gold, and platinum;
Its glassware, and queen's ware, and cut-glass,
Like diamonds and costly stone.

The freights of the night
Are real;
They come from far Cathay,
And pass to Arcady.

The Passenger Train of Night

The passenger train of night
Is bearing down on me.
Like a far, sweet horn,
It warns my feet from danger
Of stopping it.
The ribands of steel its feet skim over,
Gleam in the moon,
This train of the night throws on before as its own;
They ring for joy.
The bell is a cymbal,
And the clangor of the running
Is the noise of happy castenets,

And the clicking of the iron and steel
Is the laughter of tiny bells
On the skirts of dancers.
And the black day-smoke
Is a pillar of fire
(I dream by myself)
That leads all the passengers aright.
And the dead gray wagons of the day
Are festival halls gliding on,
Through vapors of rose,
With all the revelers in them.
I know them all—I have seen them all:
Man, woman, and child, and baby:
They are all there—I have seen them—
They are gone.
The passenger train of night
Is past,
And waves me its red adieu.

It had no need of stopping;
Its people were all aboard.
They knew their goals,
And I knew them too.
None needed to board it,
For all were on it.
They came from everyday,
And were bound for Arcady.

The passenger trains of night
Are true.

The Flyer of the Night

The flyer of the night
Is speeding apace!
I see his torch:
It quivers in his hand.
I hear his lusty trump
Echo, and re-echo.
His steely causey is singing with exultation.
All the rattle is music of motion, full-blended;
And the click,
And the clank,
Are dim harp-notes,
Far echoes
Of the triangle bells,
In all the great symphony
Of the night flyer,
In his rejoicing speed.

The black day-smoke
Is a pillar of flame.
It flashes up,
Blood red.
And I see
It is gone.
'Twas a pillar of flame
(I know—I know)
To point the flyer of the night,
In his terrible speed,
On his perilous way.

The coaches he pulled in his wake
Were chariots from Faerieland,
And his garments were gossamer
That fluttered,
And whipped,
In the speed-wind,
Alongside and behind him.
And he waved adieu with his hand,
And I glimpsed his ruby ring.
And his cloak touched my cheek,
And blinded my eyes!

I was with him,
In his golden jubilee
Of earthly speed,
In that brief space,
Eternity's law was mine;
Mine was the speed of Time;
The business of day was vanished.
I came from Olympia, in far, old Greece;
I was bound for the Happy Isles,
By way of the Pillars of Hercules!

Oh, the flyer of the night
Is faithful—is faithful.

The freights of the night are real;
The passenger trains of the night-time are true;
But the passing flyer
Of the night-tide
Was faithful to me.

The True Trains of Day and Night

And yet, my restless heart,
Why are the trains of day so false?
Oh, my tossing heart,
When are the trains of the night-time faithful?

I had almost lamented:
Ah, neither the trains of day,
Nor yet the trains of the night,
Are true, and real, and faithful!

The fitful trains of my thought,
That rise from my toiling heart,
Like incense from the much-swung censer—
They are the trains of the day;
They are unreal, and untrue, and unfaithful!

But the long, long trains of my dreams,
That arise from my resting heart,
Like perfume from roses in quiet nights,—
They are the trains of the night:
And they are real, and true, and faithful to me!

THE AGE AND THE ARTIST

(This is the modern age for the Artist,
The new age for the Builder,
Everywhere.)

I

Here is raw iron;
New-quarried rock;
Blasted granite-veins, heaped up like mere wreckage;

Meaningless marble-wealth, rugged, jagged, and sharp-edged,
Just broken from where the Creator first put it,
The cleavage glistening like satin.
What riches for the eager hands
Of the human maker of buildings!

Oh, what shall the building be?
Shall it be a Greek temple,
A plain Roman bath, or great Coliseum,
An Italian villa of the golden days,
A Gothic cathedral rearing its prayer-arches to Heaven,
Or a hybrid, mongrel edifice born of all these,
Meaning nothing?

No; it shall be a skyscraper in a mother-city of the New World!
Its feet shall stand on the foundations of the earth.
The raw iron shall be steel,
For the bones and ribs and limbs,
Of this creature of today.
Granite blocks shall be its garments,
Chiseled and shaped to comely lines,
Concrete of milled rock shall be its footstool,
And glassy marble slabs its finery, and laces, and braiding.

There it stands,
An old fairy tower come true, after ages of dreaming;

Its feet in the earth-rock,
Its brow in the clouds,
Lithely swaying
In tune with Time's pendulum!

II

This is the dawning-age for the maker,
The new-made age for the sculptor,
In the New World.

Choose what you will:
Here is satin-cleaved marble;
Here is granite in the homely block;
Here is red copper and dirty tin;
Everywhere lies clay in the plastic mass!

Oh, the hands of the maker of statues,
How eager to play in the mass of the earth;
How eager to grasp and hold
The forms of the street, and mart, and home!
The gleam in the face flitting by,
The strain on the stoker's body, in the factory bays,
The pain of the life of the slum-child:
These are the clay of the modern sculptor!

But the gleam is his marble,
And the strain is his granite,
And the pain his copper and tin,
That becomes the difficult, stubborn bronze.

And the bronze of today is an ill-mixed fusion
Of the gleam, and the strain, and the pain
Of the life of the times.

Oh, what, then, shall the ugly chaos,
The stubborn mass, become?

The image must be Youth,
Fresh come from the day's hard moil,
And the plain, the rough-spun working-clothes;
And the strain, the veins and muscle-bands distended
On the spare-fleshed arms, and the pillared throat;
And the gleam be the soul in the face that shall say:
This day also is mine!

And the pain must be rough,
In the bronze;
And the strain must be burnished smooth;
But the gleam must be silkened,
Till it glow, and burn, and flame,
Like the purest polished gold
In the cloudless sun!

There he stands, the sculptor's Youth,
Who is the great Complexity,
Dreamed of long ages ago,
Found only in the modern world!

III

This is the new-come age for the Artist,
The modern age for the painter,
In America.

Here is rough canvas a-plenty;
Before us is much bright paint;
Near at hand lie great brushes;
Freedom is unfettered!

Wield the great brush,
With the bright paint,
Upon the rough grey canvas,
And fear not:
Even a checkered daub of color may have a meaning!

But the canvas is spare and angular,
A dead surface void of interest;
The colors are living, and real, and primal,
For there is red, and blue, and yellow,
With purest white and deepest black;
But the great brush is a bear's paw;
The freedom is an outlaw's gun;
The daub is a laugh—scream—a guffaw;
The meaning, a mob-riot!

How shall my country arise—
Arise from the canvas
Of her lifeless self?

Shall the picture-painter use all the gay and
sober colors?
Shall he make the shades and tints innumerable,
He knows so deftly how to mix?
Ah, I fear me...I fear...
The canvas could not hold the treasure!
Let him choose the red, the plain red;
Let him select the white, the plain white;
Let him elect the blue, the simple blue!

Let him lead forth Red, and her daughters,
Orange, and Pink, and Rose;
Let him show us White, and her children,
Pale Yellow, and Airy Grey, and Pearly Lustre;
Let him body forth Blue, and her sturdier Sons,
Deep Blue, and Purple, and Ultra-Marine;
And call the new creation, Dawn!

And lo! The checkered daub on my country's
canvas
Hath become a bald eagle,
Striving upward toward the sun!

Thus he soars, that Eagle,
Not the double-eagle, of Old-World heraldry,
But the body of the Spirit
The Old World sought for so long in vain!
'Tis the soul of my country,
Ever seeking the dawn!

IV

This is the long-coming age for the Artist,
The American age for the molder of music,
Throughout the world.

But what shall satisfy my country's soul,
As she lifts herself to the dawn,
And wings her flight to the coming sun?

Oh, it must now be sprite-like, ethereal, airy!
It must now be the red, and the white, and the blue, in the dawn!
And the fairies of my country's spirit
Are the shades and the tints of her morn,
And her ethereal goal is the home of the rising wind,
And her airy delight is the music of the birds of the morning!

Oh, the free, pure heights of the dawn!
How good it is to be here!
Let us set up tabernacles here,
And build our homes and be at rest.
Here are the gates of hope;
We shall dwell here till they open,
And enter in and be in our glory.

Be gone! I do not hear you!
You foreign measures from Italy:
Allegro, and Largo, and Adagio!
Cease, I have put you out of mind,

You furor Teutonic of Liszt, and Beethoven,
and Wagner!
Pause awhile, I have no need of you now,
You yipping, screaming, crashing ragtime tune!
A bit softer; I cannot hear you now,
Oh, Southern Mammy's plaintive croon:
For my theme now is hope, and my song is joy!

But where is my vision of morning?
It is gone...it is gone...
And I am alone, and lonely,
High up here on the heights of dawn!
I shall go down again,
Back to the valleys of man!

Oh, what a motley symphony
Rises to me from the valleys of man!
The day is come, and man has gone to work:
I hear the yip, the scream, the crash,
Skipping through the medley of sounds;
I hear the plaintive Negro croon
Stealing through the racket of toil;
I hear the half-forgotten, savage clack of the
Indian;
And far, and only faint,
You furor Teutonic of Liszt, and Beethoven, and
Wagner!
And the Allegro, Largo, and Adiago
Of Italy across the seas!

Thus it was playing—that feast of music,
As I came down to the valleys of man;

It was that great, grand symphony
That Italia, and Germania sought;
Found by the new-age molder of music,
Fused by him into deathless shape.

V

This is the longed-for age of the Artist,
The proper age for the dramatist,
Among the nations.

Oh, thou grasper of life,
After human life, the ever-elusive;
Thou exposer of Man, and of Woman;
Thou mingler with mankind;
Thou fierce exponent of humanity!
Thou irrepressible shaper of Drama!

The ruck and run of the mere He-man,
The mere Female of the race in the nether world,
The revolting mingling of these,
Their mixing with Innocence, the child on the threshold of love:
Thou deemest all thy theme!

The muck, the smut, the slime of sex;
The great She, the Diana, She of the Janus-head of passion and virtue;
The everlasting non-commital Woman;
The love that is not love, but lust;
The truth that is not truth;

The life that is not life's All;
The God that may be anything—
Their story is thine own!

The man of big business,
Who sins against God and man,
And perishing at last, blessing his just God;
The wage-starved toiler at his machine,
Who knows and hears the injustice of his task-master
And keeps the faith with him,
But will not cease his prayer until he wins;
The woman who foils the shadowy beast
She meets in the serpent-form of manhood,
Redeeming fallen Eve through Christ;
The multitudinous nameless She,
Who suffers and endures,
Who bears her children, and rears them in the sight of the Lord,
And wins her victories in silence and peace;
He, and She, who must go through life alone,
Set aside as bachelor, and bachelor maid,
Whose sorrows no man sees revealed in flesh and blood:
Such as these are thy Drama!

But the man, the woman, themselves fallen,
Or mysteriously charmed by the swamp-lands of mankind,
Drawn, like the mosquito, to the muck, smut, and slime lakes,
And spawning a pest that poisons the flesh;

He who conjures up, not the eternal Womanly,
But the everlasting mere Female;
He who pictures the fall of girlhood seductively;
He who hides God behind the scenes:
These are thy true Comedy,
Oh, tiresome maker of Tragedy!

This is the living story of man;
This is the lifelike tale of mankind;
This, the drama of humanity,
Played on the heights of the future,
In the sight of the nations of the world.

VI

This is the yearned-for age of the Artist,
The present age of the teller of tales,
Throughout the earth.

Come, Oh, seeker after the precious seed that fructifies the fancy;
Come, striver after the big theme that shall capture thy fancy,
And bring her back home;
Come, struggler for the great, desirable plot that builds a tale of the ages;
Come, tell us thy magical secret!

Ah, Friend, believest thou I should give thee my secret away?
Would I yield up my good substance for never so much as a penny?
Hearken to me, and I shall show you the stone-break I toil and sweat in!

There are seven pits in the stone-break of my
stuff for tales.
Pit One is but plain rock, and lies open to the
weather,
And the sun of facts beats down on you hot;
These facts are bald and stubborn, and I hide
them away in the foundation,
And touch them up with my fancy outside.

Pit Two is the deepest of all in the great stone-
break;
It is a pool reaching down to Hell,
And yet, if you look up,
You may sight a star of Heaven above you.
To the plain-spoken, it is the saffron-colored
sheet of the daily press;
It is the humble white and black of all the good
works of the printing press.

Pit Three is full of the small sharp stones
The busy paragrapher has obligingly dumped
there for me;
They are excellent for keystones,
To stop up chinks in my fancy,
Or to make turrets and minarets.

Pit Four is rich in the odd-shaped, weird-
colored, delicately tinted pebbles
Of the living phrase the poet dropped there in
his wanderings.

I pet them, and fondle, and coax, and caress
them a bit:
They often spring into life,
Into beings of wonderful beauty!

Pit Five is heaped with the carvings, the studies,
the essays, and the effusions of all good
artists—
I take what I list,
What my fancy craves,
And—leave the rest as useless.

Pit Six is a gravel-pit,
And I work it like a pearl-diver,
For the rare stones that can create a pattern for
my fancy;
They are the sparks struck from the fire of
genius in many books;
I find them convenient for ready titles to my
tales,
Full-fledged for my fancy to soar on high with.

Pit Seven teems with many a morsel of finished
art
In stones of the rainbow's hues;
It is the life that I see, that you see, that we all
see;
It is very life; we see it, hear it, smell it, taste
it, and touch it, all about us.
I use it, and shape it, and mold it;
And then—and then I use—my magical secret,—

And my tale is done,
And I seek the bitter-sweet joy of making a new one!

Like a tale that is told—
Like a tale that is told—
You have sped me the time, Oh, teller of tales!
You lured me from rung to rung on your ladder of fancy,
And you dropped me
Remorselessly down from the topmost rung,
And you did it with joy for you,
And regret for me!

But the teller of tales has told his tale;
The great mosaic is finished.
Long was it tried, and now it is done,
The great Dream-come-true of all good workmen—
Of toiler, mechanic, and artisan,
Who has joy in the work he is doing,
Who glories in the work that is done,
And is keen for the task to come!

VII

This is the prayed-for age of the Artist,
The home-coming age of the poet,
To the hearts of men!

Oh, I am the heir of all the ages!
I am the heir of all the artists!

Mine is the soul of the builder,
Mine is the hand of the maker of statues,
Mine is the brush of the makers of pictures;
The gift of the molder of music is mine,
The power of the fashioner of drama is mine,
The skill of the builder of tales is mine!
I give to all men heart's-ease for their pain,
I fill their cups with rest after toil,
I cover them over, and tuck them in, when life is done.

The old-time masters
Are asleep in their tombs,
But their works are with us yet;
And when I wish to sing a lay
In the time of the one or the other,
I speak in the voice of the age of each.
But now the times are modern,
And the song to be sung is new,
And the air that I breathe is free.
The times and their song will not stop at the rhymes,—
Will not reach to the old, old rhyme;
My new song will not march in the stately metre;
And my lay of freedom will not stay in the bonds of verse or stanza!
My new-world song is a stream
That skips, and glides, and gurgles,
And ripples, and eddies, and whirls,
In turbulent commotion,

To lapsing easy flow,
And finds at last the sea of peace.

My stuff is the sway of the summer bough,
When a little wind sighs in the sun;
My words are the fragments of a quarry
That longed for ages to become a skyscraper;
My cadences are the swingings and the boundings
Of the hammers that shape my word-stones;
My lines are the cranes, and derricks, and hoists,
That help the stones to aspire to their high resting places;
My stanzas are the finished stories
In this tower of the cloudland;
My poem is the terraced, juttied, pinnacled skyscraper
That reaches for the sun, and moon, and stars!
And that reach of my poem
Is the rest for the toiler;
And the finished building of my poem
Is the heart's-ease in the pain of a fragment-life;
And the endurance of my poor poem
Is peace of imortality
From Him Who gave my poem to me!

And he who reads my poem aright, shall find in it—
The Youth of the maker of statues,
The Eagle's Flight of the painter,
The high Art Symphony of the molder of music,

The Tale of Humanity by the maker of drama,
The Mosaic of Labor of the teller of tales,
And the Heart's-ease Lay of the singer of songs.

And my story endeth as it began:
This is the modern age for the Artist,
The new age for the builder,
Everywhere—everywhere.

THE STREETS OF PROGRESS

I am in the big town,
Just come from the small town.
The grey, wide, raised streets taper on and off before me endlessly.
The oblong-checkered pavement
Dims off in the distance to the grey of the walks,
Pencil-marked only by the tracks of the trolley lines, and the shadows thrown by the curbing.
The drab, plain-windowed, oriel-windowed stone office buildings,
They become misty mansions or towers or castles,
Far up the streets of progress.

Men—men—men go by me;
And I know them not;
Women—women—women meet me,
But they have no greeting for me,
Children—children—children march by me,

But they have the sober faces of grown-up people;
Babies—babies—babies are whisked by me,
But they wear the thin look of older children;
Faces—faces—faces blur by me,
With the romance gone out of them:
All in the streets of progress—
In the streets of progress.

Automobiles, trucks, runabouts, busses, motorcycles and jitneys purr by me;
The trolley goes moaning by, clanging its gong excitedly;
Carts, and top-buggies, and wagons creep through, and crawl through, wherever they can;
The past and the present, the country and the city;
The big town and the small town, and the village and the hamlet;
They come, and they go;
They crowd together, and they linger behind;
In the streets of progress.

I cross the streets of progress,
The busy streets of progress,
Where the traffic spreads a bit, and the street is seen again,
And the mansions and towers and castles loom up from afar.
My foot is set on the streets of progress,

On the streets of distance unbounded,
On the streets of romance,
On the streets of enchantment beyond likeness!
The country lane, the highway, the small-town street;
The pavement, the asphalt, the boulevard of gardenland;
The trolley line, the subway, the elevated road;
The railway, the steelway, the steamship lines;
They are one and the same in the great unbreakable chain!
Oh, let me stand, and feel, and think—
I am setting foot on the streets of progress,
On the blessed streets of progress!

I am crossing the streets of progress,
The blessed streets of progress,
With leisure—
But a honk at the left
Affrights me!
And a dragon-clack
At the right
Is upon—is upon me!
Like a demon...grey...round-eyed—
Ghoul-jawed—ready to swallow me up—
Like—like Death!—

I see it . . . I see it . . .
I must not stand, and feel, and think.
The cars of Time do not see

The distance, the castles, and towers, and mansions,
Far up the streets of progress,
The blessed streets of progress!

THE DESCENT OF THE EAGLES

I was seated one day in the eating-room
Of a small home-like hotel,
Awaiting a luncheon that should give me freshness,
And zest for my study.
The pleasant place was filled
With buzz of contented, restful talk,
And the soft click and chip
Of knives, and forks, and spoons, against dishes,
Sounds that are music to hunger.

The black-haired, brown-eyed salesman at my side, and I,
We were talking of the spring out-doors,
For spring, and Easter were once more knocking
At the doors of the hearts of all men.
He was sleek, well-tailored, and of blessed digestion,
And, though he spoke of asparagus, soon to be served,
He was glad, he told me, that spring was near,
And he remembered and cherished one spring, of many,
That gave him a rare adventure
Of strength, and beauty, and power!

"That spring," he said, "we swung one day,—
A day just like this,—
Into the city of La Crosse,
From the viaduct that bends around it,
Before you reach the station.
I was looking upon the Mississippi below,
And the dirty ice was just going out of it,
In round cakes, with high edges around them,
Looking like yellowish water-lilies in the distance;
And on one of these I saw the prettiest sight
I believe I have ever seen:
I saw a golden eagle, and his mate,
Floating down the big river on one of those ice-floes.
He stood erect, fierce, peering southward, (You know),
And his mate looked up to him as to a captain,—
The able captain of their drifting water-lily rest-raft!"

Oh, why did he sketch that beautiful picture for me,
Only to haunt me with its wonderful strength-giving appeal,
To lift me ever since,
Whenever I see it before me,
By its unseen hand of power,
High above the commonplace about me?

Perhaps that salesman saw in my eye
A hunger transcendant,

A hunger greater than the waiter,
Who now came smiling with our luncheon,
Could ever appease with the victuals he brought us.

Perhaps he saw what I needed,
And gave me that beautiful picture,
For he glanced at the wordless thrill in my eyes,
And I saw it flash up in his own,
And neither said ever a word more about it,
But we seemed to know, and to feel, and to understand!

WHO AM I?

Who am I?
A ship with compass gone,
That drifts all aimless on
Upon a stormless sea
To port unknown to me:
That am I!

Who am I?
A barge upon the deep,
Without her load to keep,
Her purpose to fulfill,
A pilot for her will:
That am I!

Who am I?
A bark upon the foam,

That knows not why from home
It ventured, and with blame
Now broods upon its shame:
That am I!

Who am I?
A vessel filled with grace,
Whose pilot is the Word,
Whose port His unseen face,
Whose shame that hope deferred:
That am I!

CAN YOU GUESS?

Oh, pray, how will it be,
When I shall dwell with you,
My own, not just to-be,
And pledge me fondly to?
Vision of loveliness,
Pray, can you guess?

Oh, will it be a peace
Not felt by us before,
In which all searching cease,
As on one's native shore?
Vision of gentleness,
Pray, can you guess?

Oh, will it be a calm
God sent upon the storm;
A great and joyful psalm
But heart and soul perform?

Vision of happiness,
Pray, can you guess?

Oh, it will prove a rock
Beyond the reef and foam,
Beyond the wreck and shock,
Our own and real Home!
Oh, Love, let us confess,
And pledge our—Yes!

IF I SHOULD COME

If I should come today, my Love,
What would it be?
And say that I were clean and shrove
Of misery?

You say, you are unclean and foul,
My Lordly Love?
Oh, then repair to cell and cowl,
To get thee shrove!

Forgive; you must not overlook—
My misery—
If I wash clean in thy love's brook,—
What shall it be?

Oh, Love, if you would come today,
You could not be
But shrove in pity's holy ray,
Of misery!

LAND O' LEAL

Oh, what will life be like,
  When this is done
  And that begun,
When I have crossed the dike
  To Land O' Leal,
  Where sense must reel,
My soul her wings may strike?

Will it be only this:
  To eat and sleep,
  To laugh and weep,
To feel the praise and hiss,
  To aim for goals
  That end in shoals,
And only hope for bliss?

Or—shall I rather be
  One who rests well
  At eve, to tell
What all day was to me,
  And cannot come
  To all the sun
Of my biography?

Like one who writes his tale
  Of life at last,
  When all is past,
And writing much, must fail
  To tell it quite

In that fair light
That lies beyond the veil?

No; then I shall have time
To tell a deal
My Lord O' Leal
In that eternal clime,
Of life that's done,
Of life begun,
And make my tale sublime.

TO THE SUICIDE

Oh, heart, sore heart, if I might say
A word wherewith the world to sway,
I would say it to the suicide,
Before he flings his life away:

Oh, do not call the righteous Lord,
And ask Him for His great reward,
To set you free, to grant you sleep,
When you offend His holy Sword.

You cast away to certain loss
What is not yours, as one would toss
A pearl into the nether deep,
And wake to find your God a joss.

Oh, choose, dear heart, the harder start,
And rather pray for that sweet art,
That bids you fight, endure, abide,
And makes you take a man's, a woman's part.

THE SONNETEER

The Note

Oh, love,
Bear me
Above
The sea
I am of,
To flee,
A dove,
To thee!

Then might
I bring
This Note,
Alight,
And cling
To thy throat.

The Message

'Twas yesternight
Your Sonneteer
Sent you in fright
A love-note queer;
And though daylight
And night appear
An age of height
And depth of fear

And joy, my note
Has not come back.

Oh, Love, I wrote,
As on a rack,
The while to you
This Message true.

The Missive

The farmer strews the seed
Upon the longing loam;
A million kernels, freed,
He scatters like a foam.
And part is raven's feed,
Part finds a stony home,
And part is choked by weed,
Part blooms for honeycomb.

And as that part so sweet
Requires so great a waste,
Oh, Love, I deem it meet
To be not all too chaste
With missive notes, and fling
This Missive you a-wing.

The Epistle

To One I Love:
I know a bit
Of simple news I must unfurl,
And trust that you will cherish it.
I know a certain beauteous girl
Who dwells aloft where swallows flit;
I know not, is her lip a-curl,
Or is her sea-deep eye love-lit,
At me; and yet both knave and earl

Within my bosom looks to her
As to his shrine the worshipper.
And now, my Love, I write to you
This plain Epistle of delights
To learn your most respected view,
How that girl loves the

One-Who-Writes.

The Letter

Sweet Love!—
Oh, let me plead my case awhile.
You wrote at last. You say that beauteous girl
Of my Epistle I misnamed so vile,
One "of delights," could never love a churl
In any manly bosom, nor an earl.
Oh, Message, Note, Epistle, Missive, pile
Mount Pelion on Ossa's height, and hurl
The ruin down!—that I chose such a style!

But—Love, I will be calm again. You must
Divine, with woman's heart, that She I meant
Could not be any one but Whom I trust
Will treasure sacredly each word I sent,
And cherish that the most, which caused my Girl
To say, "that Girl" loved not,

Your Sonneteer,
Merle.

PHILLIPPA

(A Tale of the First Century of Our Era.)

'Twas once in fair Corinth, upon the neck
Of land that like the merest thread conducts

From upper unto nether Greece, that once
There lived a pagan maid, Phillippa named,
The child of well-provisioned parents, she
The only offspring. Near her home there lived
Young Paullus, even as a boy, a stern
Patrician, dark, and sharply featured, straight,
And earnest-mannered. But Phillippa was
Fair-haired and violet-eyed, plump-shaped, and
gay,
And when she walked, 'twas grace and harmony
In one. And still they were but children now.
They played together in the garden's realm
As innocent as children can, and built
Their home together, lived in phantasy
Enshrined as parents of Phillippa's dolls.

So passed the years before the boy grows strange
And quite absents himself from girlish mate
For undefined shame. And Paullus grew
Close-knit to Phillippa, and she to him.
Then came the parting that took him to Rome,
That distant city he must make his school
To shape himself an orator, and make
The law his own, as his father decreed.
And sweet Phillippa promised him to wait
Until he came again, so great and wise,
And kissed, as warm as any child can kiss
Affection on her brother's cheek. And then
She turned again to her dear dolls alone,
Caressing them to slumber, till the day
When Papa Paullus should come home again.

So lapsed the years again, when one bright morn
There came one Paul from overseas, and preached
A strange new life, of believing in the Christ
On earth, and of a Heaven after life,
And showed them who that great Unknown One was,
Whom they had built an altar to. He won
Phillippa and her parents to his faith,
And she grew happy in the Christ and praised
Him for his precious boon, and grace, and trust.

Not long after, came Paullus home again,
Great, slender, learned, tall, and aquiline
In feature. And how fair, how sweet did he
Find Phillippa grown up! He met her close
Beside the stone-bench of the garden, where
They kissed, and wept their childhood farewell-troth.
He sat, and drew her down beside him there,
Recalling how they parted here that hour,
And telling her, so lovely now abashed,
How he had come to claim her, now to take
Her far to Rome, to his own villa there,—
When hark, within the oleander bush
Behind them broke a twig with startling snap!
And Paullus quailed for fear, but, laying soft
Her hand upon his arm, Phillippa calmed
Him low in Jesus' name, how he keeps us
From any danger, and we need not fear!

Then Paullus suddenly flew into rage,
And seized her hands, and pressed them to the
blood,
And cursed her that she was a Christian now,
Until she screamed aloud. Then sprang a form
Up from behind the bench on Paullus quick,
A slender woman, gowned snake-like, and he
Sprang up, and cried: "Oh, Hoti, Hoti, you?"
And Hoti flew at him, and they embraced,
And Hoti mumbled: "No, you cannot get
Away from me: Your promise still is good.
I caught the ship that followed you, and bribed
The crew to keep me, by my wiles and songs.
Paullus, you shall be mine, and stay mine!"

There!—
A something bright flashed out at Paullus'
breast,
And he reeled backward, and Phillippa swooned;
But Hoti kissed Phillippa back to life;
And went rejoicing on her way, avenged.

But Oh, the joy! Phillippa kissed a light
Of life back to the eyes of Paullus; low
He groaned, and writhed, when he deemed Hoti
gone.
"Phillippa, I still live—I turned the dirk
Away—from my heart—Dear—when I saw her
Plunge it."—"Oh, Paullus, Paullus, Jesus heard
The cry my soul made to Him when I saw
You fall!" rejoiced Phillippa. And no rage
Came into Paullus' face and hands again.

RADIUM

From Madame Currie's, and old Frankish land,
There came a stirring, marvelous report;
A subtle essence trembled in her hand,
Man had not known, and beamed in her retort.
Its glow, unchecked, proved mighty unto death,
But guarded, wooed to health; a fabled sum
Only could buy it; and its two-fold breath
Could never waste this giant, Radium.

The age of miracles is done; we live
Now in the brighter-splendored one of faith.
We hear now one by one the words that give
It footing; and we find in them the wraith
Of one who slays and heals with awful ease;
And Radium is one faith-word of these!

KITTY AND DOGGIE

Said a doggie-doggie-doggie-dog
To a kitty-kitty-kitty cat:
"What makes you sleep there like a log,
So pert, and plump, and round, and fat?"

Said the kitty-kitty-kitty-cat
To the doggie-doggie-doggie-dog:
"If you are looking for a spat,
You'll jump around here like a frog!"

And then—it was doggie and kitty and doggie,
In a whirl all misty and dizzy and foggie;

'Twas doggie and kitty, and doggie and kitty,
In a medley of music most hideous and witty:
In a whirl of kitty-doggie,
Misty—foggie;
Doggie-kitty,
Howling, fitty;
Kitty-kitty, doggie-doggie—
Witty, spitty—foggy, loggy—
Kitty, gritty—Doggie, hoggy:

.. .. dog
.. .. fog
.. .. cat
.. .. bat!
.. .. run!
.. .. fun
.. .. done!

THE TALE OF THE AWFUL OOZLE

In the night
When the bright
And the glorious,
Florious
Sun
Has run
Its course
Back again to its source,
My Mother tucks my head
Deep down in my pillow-bed,
And leaves me all alone,
And says in a cuddling tone:

"Now sonny,
May milk and honey
Of Heavenly promise and blessings
Send down upon you caressings
And guessings
Of the love
Above
In answer to your prayers,
And pay me for my cares.
And now go right to sleep,
Without a wink or peep
Or else—the awful oozle,
My little toozle,
Will get you!
Yes—bet you."

That awful Oozle my Mama said,
It almost squuntched me to death;
I swiped the covers over my head,
And squimped my eyes like—Old Cheth.

But I squimped my eyes so tight they hurt
And two blood-rings came out,
Right out the big black midnight-dirt,
And I gumbled down a shout.

And then the awful Oozle glitched,
Like night with bloody eyes,
And worgled around, and mumped, and spitched,
And twirred like a thing that flies.

And it squatched and squalched in the swull like
a goose,
And all at once it glumped,
With spoof, and poof, and woof, and zoose,
That I thought my head was clumped!

But I balled my fist and smocked away,
And one blood eye glitched up,
And the other swipped like a match in the bay,
And the awful Oozle was—wup!

And to pieces, in the midnight dirt, and whee-ed!
In the air, and the sky split wide,
And the covers were pummed, and the Oozle
squee-ed!
And the Moon dragged away his hide!

And so I poomed,
And spoomed,
My Mama's awful Oozle,
The bloody, dirty moozle,
And he won't ever get me,
Either—
Neither,
If he ever met me
Again,
With his awful snoozle,
And then
Come at me like a woozle.
Oo,—boys and girls,
In dresses and curls,

Don't you ever put covers over your heads,
And squimp your eyes too tight in your beds!
If you do—
Then—Oo!
The awful Oozle
Will get my little toozle;
Will get you—
Yes—' bet you!
But—whee!
He can't get me!

THE BATTLE OF THE RHYMERS

Once in the far-off golden age,
Made famous both by bard and sage,
There was a battle red with gore
As any in the great World-War,
The Battle of the Rhymers named,
Two Rhymers, great, full brave and famed,
Of whom the one was christened Dirk,
The other—similarly—Kirk.

It was a battle as of old,
Where all the heroes strong and bold
Were gathered in an open field,
Round two they chose the spears to wield.
These heroes were the Rhymers, called
From all the region, green or bald,
Who practiced in the art sublime
That speaks to human heart in rhyme;
And Dirk and Kirk were singled out,

Each other's art to put to rout,
To stand within the circle's charms
In gilded trappings, folded arms:
And Dirk was learned in foreign lore,
While Kirk but knew his native shore.

The battle had been raging long
In sun and meadow full of song,
The rhymes had flown as swift as darts
From Dirk to Kirk, and pierced the hearts
With joy of all the heroes round,
Who cheered and made approving sound.

And one stepped forth to offer lots
These Rhymers two,—forget-me-nots.
And Dirk drew long, while Kirk drew short,
And cheering broke from all the court;
Then silence fell for to begin
That battle no one knew would win.
And Dirk he folded arms and heaved
His spangled chest like one believed
In as the victor by the crowd,
And gave his calm opponent loud
The rhyme on "Kirk"—and then the lyre
Of song was thrummed in rapid fire:
"Dirk," "work," 'like a "Turk," ' 'with "jerk," '
'And "quirk," 'and "yerk," ' 'and do not "irk," '
'Nor "lurk," 'nor "smirk" ' 'nor either "perk" '
'Like uppish "clerk," 'nor yearling "stirk," '
'When Dirk is in the "mirk," ' grinned Kirk
At last—'and knows—knows how to "firk"

It off of him,' recovered Dirk,
On count the fifth the lotsman doled
Out second-wise, and passing bold,
Another rhyme was formed by Kirk:
"And Dirk knows how to "firk" the "mirk,"
But he must never—never "shirk"!'
The lotsman counted five—eight—ten—
But Dirk found not a rhyme again
Upon the single syllable,
And—of the cheers I need not tell.

The double syllable might win—
Both masculine and feminine—
This bloody battle yet for Dirk,
But—he fell on a luckless "murk"
Again, yet rose once more on strength
Of foreign lore, when cheers at length
Subsided for the words of three,
Four, five, and many parts. With glee
Dirk then suggested, "Etiquette"—
Kirk answered quickly, "Betty met"—
And Dirk strove earnestly to fell
The growing story Kirk would tell—
And Dirk proposed, "Excrutiate"—
("Etiquette—Excrutiate")
And—"Betty met—Rex to flee Nate"—
Came from the close-watched lips of him
Who coaxed approval from the rim.
Then Dirk cried, "Unauspiciously"—
(Oh, "Etiquette—ette,—ex-cru-ci-
Ate,—un-aus-pi-ciously-ciously")—

But—"Betty met—met Rex to flee
Nate Dunn—Paw's wish, you see." laughed
Kirk.
And—"Superannuated!"—Dirk
Yelled out above the cheers about,
But Kirk's voice laid again the shout:
("Eti-)
(quette, ex'-cru-ci'-ate-un'-ate-un'-
aus-pi'-cious-ly,' su-per'-an-nu'-
at-ed'-su-per, an-nu'-at-ed,'"
("Betty")—
"Met Rex to flee Nate Dunn—Nate Dunn—
Paw's wish. You see, Sue, Par, and you
'Ate Ned." And so Dirk could not pit
A rhyme that Kirk with motherwit
Could not weave into all his tale,
And cause Dirk's foreign lore to fail.
All heroes shouted, "He's the clown!
To Kirk—to Kirk belongs the crown!!"

THE GATE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

Sons of the Mornland, westward bound,
I am the Gate to the great Mid-West!
Halt, and consider the prairies around,
Pause in your eagerness, bating your quest!

Pause, and I give you my matchless gold,
Lying here everywhere at your feet,
For it resides in the homeliest mould
Black, but creative of bread and of meat!

Home of the Windy City am I;
  She, the queen of our commerce and trade,
Ruling her country with trumpet-cry:
  "Mid-West, I will!" and compelling its aid.

I am the mother of Lincoln by fame,
  Vain might I vaunt myself to boast,
Sharing humbly his tomb and his name,—
  Giving to you what moulded him most.

Prairies of gold and of glory are mine,
  Made by the Lord into gardens of maize,
Portioned to those who by labor divine
  Bid them to bring their harvest of praise.

I am the Gate of the great Mid-West,
  Halt, and consider my prairies around,
Pause in your eagerness, bating your quest,
  Sons of the Mornland, westward bound!

MY LINES

My lines, my lines have meaning,
For I put it there.
My lines are long past weaning
From earth and air,
For they have bent and leaning
That you may share.

For my lines are like the threading
Of gossamer weave,
When leaves of grass are shedding
Their dews of eve,
And these the threads go treading
Till night bids leave.

Then in the morning hours
They catch the gleam,
And light the grassy bowers
With misty beam,
Take wing in elfin showers
To build my dream.

My lines are gossamer garlands
That hung on grass;
My words are pearls from far lands,
Or only glass;
My rhymes are glints from star-lands,
Or shining brass.

Then be not always mending,
When you run and read,
Their odd and rule-proof wending,
Across the meed,
And of their un-hoped ending,
In pearl—or bead.

Then cease, my Love, your fixing
Of my queer lines,
Or you will miss my mixing
Of bitters and wines,
That make the well and the sick sing
Of jeweled shrines!

Notes

My Smithy—January 26, 1917—When I wrote these lines, I was possessed by the idea of commercializing the verses I might thenceforth compose. I hoped that this would give a poetically expressed clew to all that might follow. But fate played havoc with such a visionary scheme, and I have now resolved to place this little poem as a memorial tablet here at the entrance to a volume of almost one hundred different poems. Like one continous wreath or festoon of Nosegays, arranged, as the four winds, in Four Sprays of distinctive characteristics, it represents the story of a life-work of now exactly twenty years. And if the work deserved such dignified designation, My Smithy expresses the mood in which I have endeavored to perform it, the mood in which I hope it will be accepted by those who enter here and view the results. I am therefore always poetically at work; nothing happens to me that I do not consciously or unconsciously associate with poetry.

I sit and work in my smithy all day;
* * * * *
And as I work and beat and twist,
I often stumble on beauty's tryst;
And often when I squirm and plod,
I find the word that comes from God!
May He prosper it further!

The Wooing of Quimby's Daughters—The first draft of this poem was made between May 30th and June 2nd, 1911. I variously called it, "Maud and Madge and Millie," "Quarryford," and "The Triple Courtship;" finally deciding upon the present title. The general story-germ lay dormant in my mind for several years. It was nurtured by the Sunday afternoon visits to the old quarries on the Iowa, opposite Iowa City, and the Old Lime Kiln, known to every alumnus of Iowa of those days and before; by newspaper articles on pioneer days in Iowa and Illinois, appearing at that time, many of which I still preserve; and by the stories told by the old settlers here at home. At last, on Decoration Day, with its potent suggestion of all that is patriotic and historical, the mood seized me to distil this subject-matter I had turned to honey within me, and I wrote down the poem as rapidly as possible in parts of four days. This I did in an upper room to the southeast in North Hill house, my bed-room, where I had a humble stand, and whither I often retired when writing.

When My Fancy Spoke—This severely meterized poem was composed November 18, 1909, at Summit house. I again had dreams of publishing these thirty-odd poems in the form of a poetic journal. I had received my Master's degree in June, but was unable to obtain a position. To occupy my mind I then consoled myself with my old songs, reading them over, revising, recalling the circumstances of their composition, and enjoying them. My state of mind was one of elevated conscious destiny. Out of this came meter, style, rhyme, and word-choice. The poem is at once the story of my thoughts and the description of this second division of my poems. This poem belongs really in a sort of poetic epoch with Master Franz Hemsterhuis.

"The spring from three impulses"—The little poetic springs, streams or rills from the birth of the spring where the rock first broke.

"Boyish longings"—The Whisperings of Night.

"Spark—bout"—Poetic varied interest Life lent to my encounter with the world.—"Fire," the resulting poetry.

"Abyss between Life and Art"—My endeavors to define the relations between the facts of life and poetry.

The different periods of years, based on the dated first drafts of the pieces run as follows:

Whisperings in the Night, 1901-1903; Whisperings at Dawn, 1903-1905; and Whisperings at Sunrise, 1907-1909.

These dates may be verified from the facts given in the succeeding Notes.

A Boy's Chant to the Flowers—It was on June 13, 1901, while I was reading in Goethe's "Aus meinem Leben," that I wrote this essay on flowers, originally called "Ode to the Flowers." I was just reading in that famous autobiography that the great Goethe, at the age of sixteen, while at a social gathering of young people, absented himself from his group, outlined and wrote down in almost its present form, his "Christ's Descent into Hell," celebrating Him as Lord and conqueror over the thrones of Satan's dominions on holy Saturday. The poem seemed a masterpiece to me. I quit my reading and began to think. Here I was, a lad older than Goethe then,—a lad as much in love with beauty as the great seer, and I had not written a single poem! I then and there resolved to make a beginning at least. I chose the first subject at hand, and literally hammered out—See My Smithy again—my first poem in English. I have called it a Chant, in order to suggest and cover its peculiar meter and phraseology. The sub-title is merely to help out this suggestion. There are significant things in it that impel me to incorporate it in this collection of verse.

"Poplar-tree" — Confusion between this and the cottonwood,—which is, however, rather prosaic. The oak seemed kingly for its strength,—the poplar, queenly for its tallness, and slender form.

"Spell"—Under an inspiration; for lack of space and time.

Lacinda—Drafted December 14, 1902. Stanzas one to three are based on an actual inspiration; the remainder being a boyish effort to gain freedom from a torturing, new-born passion.

"Prussian"—Mother came from Holstein—the beauty of her countrymen being present to me here. "Greek"—I was studying the beautiful history of these people in High School at the time.

"Lair—nipped — stripped" — Has German Lager as its suggestive basis, a bed made miserable by suffering. The remaining words, my crude efforts at realism at that stage of development. But even so, quite modern!

The title had perhaps better been Lucinda, but I leave it as my childhood fancy dictated.

Old Year's Eve—Written December 31, 1903. Inspired by the local custom of ringing the bell of Zion Church by my brothers and their playmates; a ceremony by which I was always deeply affected. This ode gives some of its meaning to me.

"Spells"—Charms, as well as suggestions, or stories told by or of the bells.

"Ring lowly"—The tolling—ringing the year by the tolling-clapper, as 1—9—0—3.

"Linens white—gay,—sad"—Worn as festive garments as well as shrouds.

"God's mercy looms"—In Christ, of course—"His," three lines further.

Leon and Helen—The date of the birth of this inspiration from the study of Greek life is January 2, 1904. 1904 is the year in which I first worked consciously as a poet, and this year has given me many memorable pleasures, unforgettable to this day.

"Flute-like"—Perhaps no other instrument is such an incorporation of the wonderful bird of love as the flute, according to record.

"Fee"—Possessions—as in "Fee Simple."

"Demand"—The sealing kiss.

Whatever Is, Is Best—January 31, 1904, is the birthday of this bit of higher pessimism. The original title was "The Monk's Remonstrance," which later seemed too far-fetched; and in casting about for a new title, I quoted this phrase from the poem.

Greatness—June 6, 1904—There is no particular inspiration behind this poem except the deprecation of genius so often heard in my school days from my religious instructor, and my impulse to defend true greatness.

My Country—June 30, 1904—The impulse behind this, and the following patriotic song,

was my ambition to write a volume entitled, The Songs of the States. This poem, My Native Land, and Iowa, are the only units so far composed.

The immediate inspiration of My Country is the continual annoying disparagement of America by my mother's kin, and my religious teachers.

My Native Land—A Hymn—July 19, 1904—An effort to celebrate my country so that the result should be a distinctly American ode of religious connotation.

The Lark of Fearingdale—Morning of July 20, 1904—An attempt to construct an allegorical legend with a moral attached. Somewhere I had seen that the lark signified hope. I wanted to get at the life-story of hope through this image of the lark, living her life in the Fearingdale of this world. Perhaps the frequent phrase in my Pastor's sermons — Jammertal—Sorrowdale—of this world, had a bit to do with the whole poem and its germination; in fact, I had at one time thought of calling the City, Sorrowdale.

I also recall that a pompous literary agent in New York, a woman, to whom I once sent this masterpiece of mine, returned it with the suggestion that I compare it with Wordsworth's, and Shelley's poems on the English sky-lark, and that there is a vast difference between mere rhyming and true poetry. The point was not

well taken, for my lark was a common Iowa meadow lark, idealized with Heavenward ascending propensities, and my poem was not in the same literary class as those of the masters named. Ichabod!—Ichabod!— — —

Iowa—Evening of July 20, 1904—"Prizing their liberties"—The State motto, "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain." This was intended as one of the distinguishing marks of a song of Iowa.

An Elegy on My Old Home—July 21, 1904—This was written at what I choose to call Summit house, as were in fact all other poems dated between the years 1903-1910, from where I could daily see my old home and birthplace, for over a year, just as we left it, across a forty-acre field. I used to feel that something ought to have been done to photograph the old house outside and inside before its tearing down, but no one seemed to care enough about it to get a camera or have it done, and I could have given no valid reason for wanting it done. I was then so destitute of means that I could not afford even this small expenditure. The only alternative was a poetic picture of the dear old homestead, as best I could write it. This then was the inspiration of the poem, and the elements are actual family events.

A Child's Sweet Call—July 23, 1904—At Summit house there was a cherry tree, under whose

spreading afternoon shade I was wont to do my vacation reading. From here I had a good view across a small lot of a large family of boys and girls, of whose play and work I saw much, greatly to my secret joy and amusement. This is the basis of the poem, and the incident is one that happened a few weeks before the writing.

"Death-bell"—It was a custom in the South,—transplanted there from Germany, to ring the parish church-bell upon a death in the congregation, tolling out the age of the deceased member at the end:—thirty-eight for my mother.

The Dandelion—July 24, 1904—A poem of Lowell's had perhops a bit to do with the suggestion of the theme of this piece. The details, plan, and form are original with me. It happens that most of the poem was composed mornings in the big blackberry and raspberry patch at Summit house—to me a loved spot at that time. The divisions indicate the comparison, which is based on nature and the interpretation of this phase of her. To one who first learned to know poetry through hymns, such an interpretation could not help but be spiritual.

The River of Music—August 13, 1904—Observing the over-emphasis—as it seemed to me—of music in the promotion of culture and as a means of public enjoyment, I conceived the idea of writing a symphony in verse. It seemed to be a perfectly legitimate question to me: Why

go to such comparatively enormous expense to study music privately and become a poor practitioner of the art, or to maintain community musical organizations, when music is only a suggestive, rather than a clearly expressive art? Why not spend the same energy and gold on poetry—its study and presentation—and satisfy the mind as well as the heart? The solution would be to fuse the form of music with the content of poetry, unifying both in a pastoral union in some such imagery as a River of Music.

I took great pleasure and comfort in this theme, and for several days wrote it out as rapidly as I could, injecting into the work all the warmth, beauty, and artistry of meter and rhyme and varying cadence that I could muster. In the first draft the meter is rather irregular, and I later revised the whole poem so that the trochaic is the prevailing measure. Rarely have I experienced such keen creative pleasure as in writing this poem.

"Ruth in Israel's land"—Music is really a stranger to us and our earth, but she has a definite mission to perform with us, as Ruth of old, who left her home to go with her mother-in-law, Naomi, humanity, to Bethlehem. Most pregnant is the suggestion in this image. The following are merely suggestions to help enjoyment.

"Accents" — Lyric and martial music contrasted.

"Sounds"—Wind, string and percussion, as in chamber, and serenade music.

"Notes"—Band, orchestral, operatic and oratorial music, as in the descriptive species of music.

"Bare, dead, lifeless"—Musical instruments when not in use.

"Quaint, queer, rugged"—Old-fashioned, odd-shaped, highly ornamented instruments.

"Rent, and splintered"—Descriptive of magnificent organs or even entire orchestras, as the Home of Music, the Rock from which the stream of music is to spring.—This double imagery must be kept in the imagination constantly.

"Now arisest"—Music as evoked from the instrument by the player.

"This, Oh, Music," etc.—Light, sprightly introduction to the entire symphony.

"Onward," etc.—Statement of the movement and its dominant characteristic.

"With its little crystal feet"—The movement deepens with a greater wealth of imagery.

"But over rock," etc.—Forecasting the following movement.

—This is the order followed, in general, in all the movements: Statement of its nature, prevailing characteristics, and some forecast of the succeeding movement.

"But thou gentle," etc.—Rondo-like resume of previous movements.

"Daughters — brothers — sisters"—By images like these I sought to introduce what seemed to me an indispensable personal or human element.

"Even as one might deem," etc.—The suggestion of the Prelude must be borne in mind—the phases of instrumental music which the stages of the river image.

"Thou, the hope and life-blood of the plain"—The material benefit is indicated.

"Making music through Life's sylvan solitude"—A suggestion of the spiritual benefits of music.

In VII, the varying meter indicates the disturbance caused by the meeting of river and ocean.

"Ruth—among our sorrows"—Ruth gleaned among the Bethlehem of her sorrows; it was sorrow to her to have been compelled to leave her home to come to the strange fields of Boas. But we know the outcome, and Ruth, as Music, has vowed to dwell with us until the final dissolution of even this Breadhouse or Bethlehem, and the grand re-union—"At the Lord's right hand, where a thousand harpist-angels stand, where Music's mellifluous strains jubilantly flow, and with sweetness come and go!"—

A Day of Delight—August 22, 1904—These lines were composed under "my cherry tree," as my sister now began to call it, out in the garden at Summit house. It had been a hot summer,

but rain had come at last, and the result was a day incomparable in its blending of May and August. The tercets and couplets combined in the stanzas seemed to have a charm most appropriate to the day, which had lured me away from my summer reading.

"Farewell"—August 29, 1904—I had been reading or thinking of something I no longer remember that caused a train of thought in me on the poetry of leave-taking. Most poets seemed to have written, emphasizing the sadness of parting and leaving this depressing thought with their readers. I proposed to show the overcoming of this pessimism, converting it into a higher pessimism, bitter-sweetened by the charms of poesy.

The Wonderful Land of Dreams—Late Summer, 1904;—probably about September 14, as it runs in my mind; I have lost the first draft, but may some day come upon it again in my "hope box." At any rate, I was sitting on the porch in a September moonlit night at Summit house, when the lines, "Oh, how sweet 'tis to dream in the moon's silvery beam," came to me. I had heard something about the "papa-girl," but do not remember having a definite little girl in mind. For two weeks I worked upon the poem at that time, which has, however, undergone many revisions since, and so finally evolved this nature-song of childhood, in which the little girl speaks the stanzas and sings the chorus, at the end falling asleep, singing.

An experimental strain of poetic music seems to lurk in the unison-rhyme, with its accompanying varied phraseology, in every third and fifth line of the main stanzas. 'Tis most radical now-a-days, but—let it pass!

An Epicure's Ode to an Orange—February 10, 1905—Written in my second year in college at Iowa, in a house at 105 North Capitol, where Old Science Hall now stands. The incident is true to the facts. It occurred to me while eating an orange to the accompaniment of a snow-storm and its roar outside, what a deliciously quiet humor might be produced by making believe I were an Epicure, and the orange, the citron-incarnation—if there be such a thing—of the spirit of the South, offering me a brimful cup of that rarest of vintages! The result is herewith offered for approval.

Passing over to the third sub-division of Whisperings, I might drop the remark that although there is an entire year or over between those of Dawnlight and those of Sunrise, I was not idle during that time. I have also been writing verses off and on in the German, my mother-tongue, since the age of fourteen, when I had already composed over a hundred variations on church hymns, and bound some of them into a neat little volume, hand-written, hand-painted in oil, and decorated. This volume I still possess. Some day it may repose in a museum as a miracle-working relic, to be sold, if at all, only at a

great price. Oh, the presumption of these mortals!

But in 1906 I was still composing in German some of the lyrics which I later incorporated in my big lyrical epic, Reumund—Ruemond or Rueman—now about to be transcribed into English by my own hand.

In 1906-1907 I was also serving my first formal apprenticeship in poetics at college, under Edwin Ford Piper, an Iowa poet, who has published "Barbwire and Other Poems." As a result of his tutelage a few bits of verse have fallen by the way, and I have picked them up again to introduce and usher in these Whisperings at Sunrise.

The Better Day—Late Winter, 1907—This bit of terza-rima caused me much trouble. I was long unable to find a suitable ending, and more than that, my guide urged me to make these verses smoother, that is, eliminate the break in the seventh line, and elsewhere; but I differed with him to the extent that I believed in adapting the old Italian and French forms to a more robust modern half-cacophonous realism, if the mood so seized me. The ending here seemed to me the best of any I had at first found, inasmuch as the appeal to sympathy and emulation is the strongest in persuasion and encouragement.

Winter and Spring—Early Spring, 1907—An exercise in tercets, written, with "Twilight-Tide," "The Poet's Vesper Song," "To A Belated Katydid," and "Peace, Why Tarriest Thou?" at

203 South Madison, Iowa City, at good old blind Mother Bolton's, my landlady for two years,—part of my apprenticeship in poetics.

Twilight-Tide—Maytime, 1907—A rondel. My purpose was not so much to produce a French lyric, which many another had done with more grace, as to tell a more or less dramatic story in this lyric form.

The Poet's Vesper Song—May 15, 1908—Like Scott, in the composition of his novels, when he dictated them amidst excruciating pain, I sweetened the torture a boil on my lame limb caused me by completing these solemn vespers. I was confined to my room, waited upon by my faithful room-mate, Carl E. Downing, who carried my meals from the restaurant where he worked for his board. One evening, thoroughly tired of study, and ready to seek sleep, I threw myself across the bed, pillowing my throbbing head upon my arms. Presently I repeated to my studying friend over at the table, the first few stanzas. I wrote them down and kept them for future elaboration. In less than a month I had the required, but enforced, leisure to do this. I had won Phi Beta Kappa honors, but was unable to attend the initiation ceremonies, and it was only with the greatest bodily inconvenience that I threaded my steps through the customary evolutions attendant upon a university graduation. In such a mood I worked out The Poet's Vesper Song.

To a Belated Katydid—October 20, 1908—An actual incident of the above date on the campus at Iowa. I believe, however, it was a locust of one species or another, judging from appearances. And yet it sang like a katydid, to me at least, and katydid I let it be. Singing there in the cold grass, it attracted my attention and moved me to make the interpretation contained in the little poem.

Peace, Why Tarriest Thou?—December 9, 1908—The phrase was a spontaneous inspiration, as far as I can recall now. I then employed it, after many alterations and revisions, as a dramatic subject-matter to express a woman's love for her lover, as opposed to the customary love songs from the masculine standpoint.

To The Evening Star—December 30, 1908—Suggested by the lines,

—"bid haste the evening star
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp,"—

in Book VIII, Paradise Lost. This is another poem that has undergone many revisions. I wrote while reading Milton during Christmas vacation at Summit house.

Love In A Cottage—New Year's Tide 1909—The primal suggestion was a desire on my part to give in a song the evils of divorce, but finally revised it into its present form, with the poignant climax in the last line.

The Lover's Prayer—January 14, 1909—This personal heart-throb at first consisted only of the first four lines of stanzas one and two, and the last four lines of the last stanza, the last lines of these quatrains reading, respectively, "Over me," "Through my soul," and "In God's care."

The inspiraton of this poem was one often seen by me while at Iowa; scarcely more than a child, it is true; but whose peculiar beauty of face, smile and character was of the kind to the charms of which I found myself helplessly susceptible.

"In my garden lane"—The lane pointing to the West, running between the garden with my cherry tree, and the berry and apple orchard, at Summit house.

The mere incidents here portrayed are not actual, but written out of the fervor of my feeling, and attributed to the imaginary lover; they are true only as far as my feelings are concerned. To free myself, I projected my feelings into the imaginary love story of another.

Life and I—Youth, January 20, 1908—Mood First, April 29, 1909—Mood Second to Fifth, inclusive, August 5, 1908—Manhood. March 19, 1909—Mood Sixth, August 5, 1908—Mood Seventh, except lines one and two, August 6, 1908—Epilog, December 20, 1908.

This cycle of dramatic lyrical balladry is then a work of years. Its actual inspiration was a

mood of discouragement, primarily concerning the fate of my poetic efforts, a mood recurring again and again, and as often inspiring a work of art in me. I knew I could not live on poetry alone. Then, which calling—materialistic calling —ought I to choose? And yet that constant strife between this modern Leah, and Rachel, in my house! It was distracting, to say the least.

Well, after the "Oracle's Response" had been drafted, it served as the keystone to the entire cycle.

"Mother-sphere—Dead gleaming mass—lonely stone"—A meteor, from which burning pieces fly and fall, cooling upon the earth. Man, as to his knowledge of previous existence.

"Then win"—See that you win.

"The second thought of love"—The vicarious experience of love.

"The good that's thine"—Artistic truth.

"Required"—Asked again, the original etymological meaning of the word.

"Repeat what failed"—Try over that in which you tried to reach your aim.

Early Spring—March 24, 1909—The basis of this little lyric was certain impressions of the earliest signs of the coming spring. While at Iowa, down on Madison, I could hear the cuckoo, upon my first awaking in the morning, either out in the trees near the house, or even on the heights across the nearby river. The figure in the last stanza has always appealed to me, but I have

never been able to capture it in an entirely satisfactory expression.

Trysting Sighs—July 11, 1909. These outbursts of passion—of the passion of love—as I intended them to be, owe their origin to the same lovely being who inspired the Lover's Prayer.

The first poem of the three describes a true incident. It is a record of my feelings, as I saw my little friend pass down the street and disappear in her home. The second lyric is a memorial to the many happy visits I paid her indirectly, for she was hardly more than a child, and passed the time with her, and in her presence at some simple game, in the privacy of her family. The last of these Trysts is a poetic impersonalization of a dream in which I saw the living presence before me, giving me such exquisite pleasure that I tried to symbolize it by the images employed. The bitter-sweet expression of the face, the incomparable smile, and the laughter of her whole being; vanished at dawn with the dream, left me nothing but the memory of the final wistful question. To find relief I again consoled myself that I still had Poesy, in spite of all losses of another kind.

When My Fancy Commanded—November 30, 1909—This poetic Tail-piece belongs in a class with "When My Fancy Spoke," and "Master Franz Hemsterhuis." It is needless to mention the inspiration of this rigidly regular narrative

poem. The first stanza, and its similarity to its earlier companion-piece, tell the story.

"Like fervent organ peal" — That full, deep, rich warmth, often piercing in its quality, one finds in the voices of some women; like a peal in its effect.

"Answerfall" — Analogous to foot-fall, — no sound came in answer.

Master Franz Hemsterhuis

This poem was composed between December, 15, 1909 and January 6, 1910. At first drafted as a continuous long poem, but on or about July 30, 1915, I divided it into Idyls with appropriate inserts between them. But the entire work is of the same period as "When My Fancy Spoke," and "When My Fancy Commanded," by reason of the time of composition and general style.

The facts that cluster about the immediate inspiration of this rather ambitious character-study, as far as I can now recall them, are briefly as follows: In the summer of 1908, I chanced to be reading in my little second-hand Britannica the article on Aesthetics. In this article there occurred a passage which immediately absorbed my attention. The passage was this:

"There are a few writers on aesthetic subjects to be found in Italian and Dutch literature, but they have little of original speculation. One Dutch writer, Franz Hemsterhuis (frants hem

ster hois) (18th century) is worth mentioning. His philosophic views are an attempt at reconciliation between the sensational and the intuitive system of knowledge. The only faculty of true knowledge is an internal sense, nevertheless all true knowledge comes through the senses. The soul, desiring immediate and complete knowledge, and being limited by the union with the senses, which are incapable of perfectly simultaneous action, strives to gain the greatest number of the elements of cognition or ideas in the shortest possible time. In proportion as this effort is successful, the knowledge is attended with enjoyment. The highest measure of this delight is given by beauty, wherefore it may be defined as that which affords the largest number of ideas in the shortest time."

Under the first partial copy I made of this passage, I straightway jotted down this note:

"Theme for poem on this principle and the possible character of the author of same."

Nothing urged me to do anything further about the gathering of material, until December 10, 1909, when, possibly on the strength of the recital of my poems before the German society of my Alma Mater, and the kindly auspices of Professor Charles Bundy Wilson, I gathered notes on the life of Franz and Tiberius Hemsterhuis, the latter the father of the former. Subsequently I also made other studies relative to the whole general subject. It was about this

time that the poem took shape in my mind, but I could not make any headway beyond the first line.

After spending another week in vain efforts to get myself into the mood of writing, I at last succeeded on the 15th, when I hammered out fifteen lines. From then onward the spirit was upon me and I completed the first draft as carefully as possible, within the thirty-one days following. Of these, however, only twenty-three days were actually fortunate, the remaining ten comprising Sundays and holidays. The number of lines per day ranged from five, on December 16th, to one hundred twenty lines, on January 5th! It was an all-day session sometimes, bordering on mental exhaustion, when the mood was upon me.

The problem I had made up my mind to solve was, briefly, the vitalization and visualization of the man behind the encyclopedia passage quoted above. How could I cause him to reveal himself in human form? Well, here was a certain man, a native of the Netherlands, who was educated at Leyden, was Secretary of the Council of the United Provinces, wrote letters in French on moral philosophy and aesthetics or the origin of the appreciation of beauty. That was as good as all I had to begin with. As for the rest, this philosophical principle apparently had to be uttered by a man who had lived it out in his own life. Such a man had to be a finished

product at the time of presentation; a man in his prime, who possessed a wife and family, had his home paid for, had a slightly more than sufficient livelihood, and the necessary leisure and inclination for private study and the pursuit of cultural and refining studies of human life and history. He had to be a man thoroughly Dutch in character and sympathies, independent in his beliefs and convictions; a lover of extreme orderliness and cleanliness; fond of his family; drawn at all times toward the beautiful in life, and feeling a keen enjoyment in the study and contemplation and achievement of it; revealing himself to the fullest extent only to those whom he instinctively felt justified in honoring with such revelation and trusting implicitly in the providence of God and the saving grace of the Christ.

The historical Franz Hemsterhuis lived between 1720 and 1790. He was a man of the eighteenth century. He then had to have this eventful century as a historical background. He was therefore in his prime at about 1766,—at a time when the impulses that were to flower out in the nineteenth century were still in bud. A man of this type, living in Holland in 1766, could not help but show some sign of a mental wave which at this time was taking rather violent hold of Germany—the "storm and stress" movement—which had as one of its dominant motives the acquiring of superhuman knowledge. This

requirement Hemsterhuis met amply through his theory of beauty. He was also a man of his times, in that he possessed a strong sense of identity with his own state. He was a man of his past, in that he still shows faith in the religious principles of the Reformation. But above all he simply speaks to us across the centuries in his masterly exposition of the political peace and its attendant blessings.

This man, it seemed to me, had to be presented in a colloquy with a young man who would at once be his willing pupil and his intimate friend. Only to such a one would Hemsterhuis be glad to reveal himself, and tell him all his thoughts and express his feelings without reserve. It had to be a certain Piet Staatward (peet stoat woard), who had been in the dilemma in which Hemsterhuis once upon a time found himself also. Then Hemsterhuis would be driven to tell his own life-story in order to help Piet see the solution of his problem; to employ every resource at his command to restore courage to the faint-hearted Piet; to philosophize for him; unsuccessful in this, to lecture him, and point morals for him; failing in philosophy and moralizing, to fall back upon his favorite theme—the exposition of his theory of the beautiful, his doctrine of the ideal, of failure in life, and of salvation from all defect in the end. Then behold my Franz Hemsterhuis, the ideal philosopher, moralist, and lover of beauty; all blended into one consistent,

harmonious man standing Janus-like at the parting of the ways in the eighteenth century!

Having mapped out this rather involved plan, I looked about for a suitable form into which to cast it. To hew as near as possible to everyday speech, simplicity and directness of tone, and yet seem not too far removed from the restrained freedom of poetry, appeared to be the safest solution. What then should the meter be? After elimating other meters, such as five-beat iambic unrhymed verse, because of its epic and dramatic suggestions, I chose four-stress iambic unrhymed meter as the proper medium, because of its appropriateness for a colloquy such as I had in mind, for its calm and yet quickened upward and forward movement and its greater freedom for unhampered expression of thought, variation of sentence-structure and pauses and the introduction of pleasing irregularities—all in all typifying in artistic guise a poetic conversation.

Among the minor details the most vital was the choice of words for this particular poem. Only strong, pithy and weighty words; if possible, words which suggest not only their present meaning, but the often more potent connotation they possessed at an earlier period of the language; words of moderate length, mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin; only enough of those of Latin or other foreign derivation interspersed to suggest the educated atmosphere of the sur-

roundings of Hemsterhuis and Piet:—these were self-imposed rules I carefully tried to follow during the process of composition.

The first draft, and the first few copies of the poem, were cast in an unbroken narrative form. This later appeared to me as being out of accord with the spirit of our times. I therefore divided the work into main units; into idyls, into editorial or journalistic cuttings as it were, with the present character title, and modernized subtitle.

"Good even"—Suggestive of the quaintness we are accustomed to associate with Holland; as in "even-tide."

"Fare"—Another word of potent suggestion, derived from Germanic "faren," travel on the sea.

"Master"—Sir, mister, teacher.

"Did lift"—Simply another suggestion of quaintness.

"Fowling-piece — vermin-spade" — Hands calloused with musket and spade to dig out the entrenched enemy. There is a suggestion of humor in the terms Hemsterhuis uses here, as if Piet, in his youth, considered the serious business of war as being only a killing of vermin and noisome birds.

"Offices"—Latin, services, duty.

"Staatwaard"—As if rhymed with "boat-sport,"—guarding the State.

"Another chair"—Of course Hemsterhuis' big

armchair has its fixed place by the fireside, and none but himself occupies it.

"Wool-worn" — Sheep-skin, with wool worn off in places by long use.

"Gueux"—Pronounced with hard g, to rhyme with "noise." The Gueux were a band of brave patriots who carried on a kind of guerilla warfare against the oppressive Spaniards, both on land and sea.

"Nassau's Louis"—Louis of Nassau, who helped the Dutch free themselves from Spain; he lived about 1550.

"Spanish Phillip"—Phillip II of Spain, who was sending his armies at this time.

"Silent Father William"—William the Silent of Orange, known to the Dutch patriots as "Father William." He was the ablest leader of the patriots, and one of the great makers of history. His career lay between the years 1570-1584, when he was assassinated.

"Maurice"—Second son of William the Silent who succeeded his father in the leadership of the independent party in the Netherlands, at the age of seventeen. This is simply another form of the name Moritz, in the next line. Probably Moritz Staatwaard was christened after his great namesake.

"Frederick Henry's balk"—He was the brother of Maurice, and came into power upon the latter's death, in 1625. The "balk" refers to the general disappointment which the States felt toward their governor, but particularly to an

alliance with France against Spain which Frederick Henry did not support as they expected him to do. He died in 1647.

"William Second's awkwardness"—His efforts to resume war with Spain, his favoring the English royalists in Holland, and his reckless perpetration of acts that almost destroyed the Dutch liberties. These movements were cut short by his death in 1650.

"William Third — home-leaning over to France" — He was king of England and Prince of Orange, son of William II, stadtholder of the Netherlands from the latter's death to his death in 1707; from Hemsterhuis', and Piet's standpoint he had more interest in France and England than in Holland. "Home-leaning"—the old hatred in Holland against the house of Orleans, which sprung up after his death without a successor.

"States-General"—The representative governing body of the Provinces of Holland.

"Muenster"—Capital of the province of Westphalia, in Prussia, scene of the signing of the treaty closing the Thirty Years' War, and the Eighty Years' War,—in 1648. It is a beautiful little city of over 60,000 inhabitants.

"Council of the Provinces"—The same as the States General.

"The Hague"—Then, as now, the capital of Holland and her United Provinces. Seat of the sessions of the States of Holland since 1584.

"Well-meaning William Fourth"—He died in 1751. Dull and quiet by nature, he did his best to develop the commercial and manufacturing interests of his country. He was known to royalty as William Charles Henry Friso, and was chosen by the Orange party as dictator over seven Provinces.

"William Fifth"—He was declared of age in 1766, seven years after the death of his mother, Anne of England, who was not an apt regent. He was weak, irresolute, and entirely under the influence of his tutor, Louis of Brunswick. His reign is insignificant, except for the founding of several important learned societies.

"Groningen"—A city of considerable fame as a university center.

"Remonstrance leavings"—What was left of the religious-political party, which, in 1610, presented a "remonstrance" to the stricter Calvinists, who answered by a counter-remonstrance. The latter won at the Synod of Dort in 1618. In 1630 the former gained liberty to live anywhere in Holland and build churches and schools. Hemsterhuis seems to apply the term to political rather than to religious Remonstrants.

"Franeker and Friesland paused"—These Provinces did not at first belong to the States-General and the union of Holland.

"Culture divine"—The flower of Christian education and civilization.

"Protocol"—Book of minutes of meetings.

"Leyden's Academe"—The Academy, or university, with its quiet so loved by the studious. It was a very famous institution of higher learning of the times.

"Ever-warring" — "Ever" here slurred to "e'er," or "ev'r."

"Half of the heart-store paid for the whole flesh could give me"—An example of Hemsterhuis' philosophizing, and mathematics. If we let "heart-lore"—the intellectual and spiritual values of life—equal x and y, the purely material and necessary life-values, then the proper proportioning or balancing of these would be z-plus, thereby showing that nature and life have higher than purely mathematical values. When we give up or "sell?" our selfishness in exchange for the material benefits of life, we gain the half, and more, of all the good things of life. Then the final formula is really this: x plus y plus z-plus equals beauty and perfection.

"Flesh paid half—for fourth"—The same general formula as above, but x resolved into halves (1-2x plus 1-2x) plus y equals z-plus, one of these 1-2x's representing home-life-pride, which is really a part of heart-lore above.

"Its touch is lost"—Its present touch is meant; the general bunch or bundle of cencepts it has helped to produce in us is, of course, now an unconscious or sub-conscious part of us.

"Home's lessons three"—Smell, taste, and touch.

"School-sense twofold"—Sight and hearing.

"Behold himself"—Tremble at his own love-words—caress his self—nostrils feel dearest meat—lips taste rarest drink"—The theory here taken for granted is this: We do not really see anything, except what is separated from our ego. Therefore, others really see us in a way that we can never hope to see ourselves, even by such devices as the looking-glass. Our words of love, the greatest passion that moves us, give a pleasure to our loved ones we cannot experience. Those who caress us, likewise, have a greater knowledge of us than we can ever hope to gain of ourselves. Even our two most utilitarian senses — taste and smell — deceive us, or keep this experience of self from us, for no matter how wrapped up our senses, and so our very selves with them, in our "dearest meat," and "rarest drink," when we have them, they still leave something to be desired. Hemsterhuis here comes very near to perpetrating the one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, when he breaks the logical sequence after the "caress of self," but that is his intention, as we see when we follow him closely,—namely, to touch upon the psychological problem above suggested. The grand solution of this entire philosophical problem is the Portrait of Rembrandt.

"Give pride—sin and death give rest"—Admit, confess, repent of your sins, from which all

frailty, and its natural consequence, death, come, and you take on, by the agency of God, the mantle of perfection in Christ.

Modern Moods and Measures

The Antiquity of Poetry—The Soul to the Sea —I am not certain of the exact date of these two specimens of the Occidental, and the Oriental sonnet. They are still a part of my apprenticeship in poetics at Iowa, and were composed under this influence some time in May, in 1907. They have been so much revised since, however, that no great violence is done to the sequence, if I place them here as a prolog to the final Spray of my book.

"Divine—intoned for earth"—An example of each, sacred and profane poetry, is given here.

This is the first in a sequence of sonnets on this theme, which I had planned, but the inspiration has halted here.

"Hafiz—Nisami"—Persian poets. It was a fashion among these to incorporate your own name in the last lines of your ghazal.

The Tanner and His Raid—August 7, 1908. The first ballad in a contemplated work, "The Tanner of Kenmare," in which the ballad in varying meters was to be brought into relations with the Irish missionary, Saint Columban. I hoped to combine realism, the supernatural, and the ideal into a real unity. I was one day reading the story of Saint Columban in the encyclopedia,

a legend in which a wild Irish raider committed a sacrilege against the sacred oak of Kenmare and was punished forthwith by leprosy. I ought to add that my attention was first called to this tale by a version of it in a "patent-inside" item in a newspaper.

"Kenmare—Dermod"—Two rivers in the southwestern part of Ireland. Perhaps the Raider's family name was derived from this river since ancient days.

"A hundred pits"—The old-time tanner made his pits in the ground. In these he soaked his hides with copse-bark, oak-bark, and other parts of plants and trees prized for their chemical proprieties useful principally to tanners. The process to which the hides were subjected in the pits lasted for months, and when they were taken up at the end of that time, all hair and animal matter could easily be removed from the remaining body of the pelt.

"Kerry's landscape — Mt. Carntual" — The county in which Fitz-Dermod lived, and a mountain district to the north of its manor-place.

Life's Explorer—March 9, 1910. This modern ballad, or whatever else it ought to be called, was written under the influence of the Busy-Bee Syndicate of the East, which I had joined. The stationery of this literary agency was watermarked by a bee with out-spread wings, hence the name I have applied to it. The chief occupation of this syndicate seemed to be to collect its

fees from you in advance, faithfully return your manuscripts, and render therewith very brief, non-committal criticisms. Some of the latter were really quite bright, ironically speaking. The only way in which they helped me was that they gave me an impulse to write some verses of which I am still fond. The reason given for rejecting "Life's Explorer" was that it was based on an idea not sufficiently original. This seemed to me beside the point, for the theme is not original ideas, but a presentation of three dominant instincts or motives of human life, brought together in one unified ballad,—life-work, love and destiny beyond life.

The image of the first stanza is a picture still in my mind with its pristine freshness, dating from my first visit to a city, when I saw hundreds of men go to work in the winter dawn-light, away down in the street.

The Song of the Seasons—May 6, 1910—Born of the desire to produce a song that would be in season the year around. This little lyric has been set to music by Genevieve Scott and was published by a company in the East. I still have most of the first edition in my "hope box" of manuscripts.

Wooing Sleep—May 7, 1910—A lullaby in which anomatapoeia is employed, also economy of sounds and words, just beyond the pale of mere repetition, producing an interlocked unity with a charm of its own.

Aphorisms—May 10, 1910—An effort to create semiepigrammatic sayings out of the stray thoughts I could not incorporate in my poems, stories, and articles of this "period." Of course, none of these were ever deemed good enough to be accepted, but they left their blessings in passing.

Treasures of Life—June 7, 1910—An afterthought to "Life's Explorer." A blank verse lyric with assonance for rhyme.

Everything written after June 10, 1910, was dated from what I shall call North Hill house. The above date was the day on which we removed from Summit house to this new mansion-like residence, which was to be my home until December 17, 1919. Since then I have called the Commercial House my habitation.

To a Beautiful Child—August 9, 1910—The inspiration of this poem was a little girl, who took part, years before, in a home-talent pageant. My boyish fancy was so impressed by her beauty that long afterwards its memory brought forth this lyric of regret. It was published in the Saint Louis "Saengerbote," an English-German lyric quarterly, which made merry many hearts in the Missouri Synod for five years, and then vanished away for lack of sufficient support.

The Blessed Water-Ouzel—November 21, 1910—In an old Cosmopolitan of some seven or eight years before, I read this day an article on the Music of Nature, in which I caught the phrase, "the blessed water ouzel," whose song was there beau-

tifully described as imitating the sound of falling waters, behind which it builds its nest, as a protection against its enemies. It became my inspiration. An ouzel, as here understood, is a thrush of the singing variety.

"Christened thee"—Refers to "blessed,"—in the Biblical sense.

"Showing me to thee"—directing me to thee.

Here end the poems born of the Busy-Bee syndicate fiasco.

The Race of the Plodders—January 31, 1911—In one of the largest papers of the neighborhood, our family paper, there appeared a poem of a nature similar to this. I quickly penned The Race of the Plodders and sent it in, only to have it returned with thanks, and with the remark from the editor that he had suddenly decided to quit once for all the publication of verse, because people just besieged him if he continued. Perhaps someone else will appreciate my masterpiece, if I place it here in my autobiography as a mile stone marking this gentle rebuff.

This is the only English verse extant of this year of 1911. I was at work on my German-American lyrical epic, "Reumund," or Rueman, as I am transcribing it at present into English free verse.

The Pine Torch—November 10, 1912—A slight memorial to my friendship with my colored friend, Laurence C. Jones, who had asked

me to revise some verse to be used in a building campaign. He was at that time trying to build an administration hall for at least $10,000, for his Piney Woods Country Life School, down at Braxton, Mississippi, in the widely known "black belt," which he is rapidly converting into a district worthy of a better name, educating his fellowmen to the dignity of intelligent labor, useful knowledge and practical Christianity. My thoughts wandered away from the building campaign, and memory turned back to my first thoughts on seeing The Pine Torch, the little paper printed by my friend's charges. The result was the first twelve lines of the little poem, which he was kind enough to publish in the Torch of which it sung. Later I added the last two lines, thus really making a sonnet out of it. It suggests the growth of the school from the cabin-stage to its present condition of being an industrial college.

The Penitent—August 9, 1913—Inspired by some thoughts from Bible history, which I was teaching in Zion Parochial School at this time. I was also busying myself with allegorical ideas, as I remember it now; hence the fusion of these two elements in the sublimity of the mood I strove to express. This was also published in the "Saengerbote."

Married—October 16, 1913—The inspiration here is the same as that of "Trysting Sighs," and "The Lover's Prayer." The brief threnody sug-

gests its own story, which agrees literally with the facts. I was engaged in the humble task of building fire at school in the morning when the lines seemed to form themselves on my lips to the tune I was humming.

The Great Gap—October 30. 1913.—The Beast-Man, October 31—The Wiseacre, November 1.—I Seem Like Adam, November 27.—The origin of this series of controversial and didactic verse was similar to that of "The Penitent;" that is, they were composed under the same influence. They were all submitted to the "Saengerbote," but only The Great Gap and the Wiseacre received the honors of publication. The idea underlying The Great Gap had long occupied me, and I had never heard or read a solution for it that was satisfactory to me. My acquaintance with it dated from college days. The Beast-Man, of course, has to do with the Missing Link theory, or stage, of the great controversy; but the statement that really caused me to write the purposly repellent verses ran to the effect that "Christianity was a mass of superstitions," which a so-called Higher Critic had publicly stated at the time. A new one of the apparently periodical attacks on Genesis inspired The Wiseacre, and a discouragement over the non-acceptance of some of my own work, put me into the ironical and sarcastic mood that is mirrored in I Seem Like Adam.

Impatience—November 29, 1913—When I wrote this I was still in the sign of the previous

poem. A day, the like of which is described in the lyric, was the basis of its inspiration.

Salema at the Savior's Tomb—December 29, 1913—An aftermath of the poetic course at Iowa. It was originally a task set by the instructor, an assignment to write blank verse. I handed in at that time the first part of the poem ending at the line, "And lo! Salema made the cross she feared." I completed and revised it as a whole on the date given above. The impetus to choose this particular theme was the Biblical passage in the gospels containing the story of Mary Magdalene, and the expression, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." The pathos of this incident urged me to try to tell the story of a little blind girl, who was made to see, and now pays the Master this wondrous compliment. After some arguments with the editor of the "Saengerbote," as to the identity, or confusion of my little heroine with the Magdalene, I quoted him John 20, 30 and 31. My short story in verse was then published without further difficulty. Years before this, my instructor had cautioned me that the writing of a real poem was not the work of a few hours, but often the work of a life-time. I took it as a gentle rebuke for having chosen the theme I did and continued my filing and chiseling unto this day.

"Salema"—The Oriental greeting, "Salaam!" Peace be with you!—with the feminine ending, —a.

At about this juncture, in December of 1913, I entered upon another apprenticeship in poetic art and science. I studied under a prominent writer of poetry for the press and the magazines, under the auspices of a Massachusetts correspondence school, winning a diploma from them at the conclusion of the course in the summer of 1914. This influence marked a fresh flow of water from the Pierian spring for me. But in the hope of converting my art into a little money I have been disappointed unto this present hour.

The Seasons in Rhyme—January 26, 1914—Here the task was practice in the four chief meters. To lend fancy's charms to the appointed lesson, I chose the story of the four seasons. In the first stanza I gave the theme in iambics, and then made variations on it in the three remaining measures.

The Indian Grave—January 26, 1914—Inspired by a picture with this title in the little United States history I taught the children at Zion school. This picture is described in the lyric,—a cot with the dead brave upon it, elevated on four man-high poles. As for the task, it was to be an effort to select a form suited to the thought, and to write two stanzas of the utmost regularity. Even from this I tried to wring my best poetry.

The One Night—January 28, 1914—A study in the intimacy that may exist between rhythm and the thought suggested. It was to be a selection from the poets, expressing the calm of night, but I evolved my own specimen by giving form to my many studies of moonlit nights on the front porch and my experience of the passion feeding on such nights.

The Sea—February 26, 1914—A study in color, tonal, and contrasting effects, embodying Homeric and modern conceptions of the sea, as memory served me in this.

Rhymes and Stanzas—March 3, 1914—A manifold effort to give in traditional forms the spirit of the set stanzas and measures of the earlier English poets. My ambition was to transcend the formality of the task by new touches here and there.

Milton's Self—March 3, 1914—A translation into verse of Macaulay's passage:—In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in "Allegro" and the "Penseroso." It is impossible to conceiye that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. Those forms differ from others as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close-packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make a poem himself. Every epithet is a text for a

stanza." It was my aim to extract the germs of poetry in these sentences and cause them to bloom and grow, as far as this was possible.

The Song of the Hearth-Smoke—March 4, 1914—Mastery of metrical and stanza forms was the goal set for me here. I made it mostly an exercise in fairly difficult rhymes. Being in the habit of storing any impressive life-facts in my memory for future use, I now recalled one image that has always had a peculiar charm for me. It was the sight of smoke rising from the chimneys at twilight in the late fall. This then became the inspiration of my metrical theme. My worthy instructor took exception to several of the statements concerning the things the hearth-smoke is said to do in the poem, but I still maintain every statement made here as truthful enough to let it stand. I emphasize it again, "My lines, my lines have meaning!" Think it over!

My Home—March 10, 1914—My cue here was to write a short description in blank verse of the country near my home, which immediately transformed itself into a quoted and repeated question ,and the poem into a monologue.

A Ballad of Nineteen-Now—March 19, 1914—My task was to select a short story at random and narrate it in ballad form, being careful to adopt a suitable meter. Out of the material at hand I originated my own problem, namely, to let the meter approach as nearly as possible to

modern idioms of speech and stresses, and still to keep within the limits of the traditional ballad measure. The setting also helped to make an almost entirely new tale out of the original, providing atmosphere and the quality of timeliness.

The Wooden Horse—March 20, 1914—The problem and the inspiration here practically coincided. It was my task to recast an episode from Homer into ballad form, keeping the meter more conservative as to irregularities than in The Ballad of Nineteen-Now. And what story could be more alluring than the well-known tale of Ulysses' Wooden Horse? I endeavored to vary the version that was to be mine by detailing the building so as to suggest the state of mind of the victimized spectators.

The Sun—March 21, 1914—The impulse to write this sixteen-line lyric of the modern type was given by my assignment to write a lyric on a theme of fire—the phase most appealing to me. I was induced to choose the sun by the once prevailing pagan conceptions of this great fire of nature, as I recalled them. I had in mind the words of the psalmist in which he praises God for making His angels winds and His servants flames of fire. I reasoned, if this be true, then this glorious sun must be the arch-angel of our earth! Hence the climax of the poem as it stands.

My First Aeroplane—March 24, 1914—This sonnet upon a modern theme in the Italian pat-

tern was inspired by my first seeing an aeroplane ascent at one of our little home country fairs. I had carefully observed every movement of plane and spectators and there was very present in my mind a feeling of duty, that I ought to celebrate this event in my life, and its meaning, even then dawning upon me. My assignment in the poetics course was the occasion to use this new material which had reposed for a year or two in the background of my memory.

Echoes from Old Greece—March 27, 1914—Here I was left to choose three of the most attractive classical forms, and to write a stanza complete in itself in each. In hexameters I tried to do something for my art by the aid of Orpheus' example, conceiving its modern analogy as the use of the raw material of nature to create a thing of charming beauty. Sapphics seemed most appropriate for a brief statement of the relation of this unique, undying character in poetic history to us modern readers of her few translated verses. And choriambics, these haunting, hesitant, yet onward moving measures of a trochee and an iambus to the phrase or cadence, could be employed in no better way than in describing the dance. Each line begins with a spondee, continues in three choriambics, and ends in an iambus. First we perceive the music; then the "review," the grand march or procession of all the dancers; following this, the dance itself and finally, the close of the dance. It is

my conviction that there are great possibilities in the use of these classical measures. A study of the different feet, such as the pyrrhic, the choriambic and others of the longer cadences would produce wonderful effects in our free verse of the present. Of course, we must keep to the accentual, instead of trying to imitate the ancient quantitative stress. But that is the very contention for which this whole volume is intended as an object lesson. We may adapt, but we convert what we so adapt into forms appropriate to the material of our own times.

Apple-Plucking Time—March 28, 1914—This villanelle upon a pastoral theme of my own choice was my long-sought opportunity to express in part at least the indefinable pleasure I felt in studying the mellow splendor of an Iowa Indian summer.

"Of age his rest"—Freedom from the restlessness and romance of youth.

The Song of the Spring Wind—March 31, 1914—This rollicking song upon a stirring outdoors theme again served me as an outlet of expression for a peculiar love I have always felt for a windy day in autumn or spring. "Rollicking" was the word of inspiration, which loosened the band of my tongue for the remainder of the song, which gave me considerable trouble in the polishing, especially in the refrain, which I changed from a varying wording to an exact repetition, at the suggestion of my instructor.

The object was the achievement of that insipid smoothness of expression, for which I, personally, care very little when my thoughts do not happen to be demanding such leveling forms.

Rhyme Play—About April 1, 1914—All of these stanza forms from the more modern masters of the lyric were first penned under the direction of my New England correspondence course in poetics. They were all written on or about the above date, though their present alignment was a fancy of a later day. My aim was to make each stanza worthwhile in itself, even though it were imitative work.

Thy Bitter-Sweet, Sweet Smile—April 2, 1914—It has always seemed extremely irksome, and even uncomfortable to me, that I should be compelled to write according to direction, or in adaptive imitation of the work of others. This little song is a living memorial to this fact. Songs of the good old days, still capable of popular interest, should be supplemented by newer ones of like merit. A song that is to be popular must have a striking first line, in order to catch the attention of the public. Songs of human interest, aiming to please both popular and literary taste, these we want today. Such were my admonitions. The result was the lyric under consideration here, inspired once more by her of "Trysting Sighs" and other memories.

Summer Magic—June 4, 1914—At this point in the poem-sequence of the Spray on Modern

Moods and Measures, we have come to the last formal assignments in my poetics course. I forthwith let my muse give me my tasks in poesy. She did not fail me. On the first real summer day of that year, after school work was once more laid aside, a day of sizzling, humid, steaming oppression, such as the Mississippi valley only can produce in Iowa, I suddenly heard the call of the lark at noon. The rest of what I felt then is found in Summer Magic I. The second lyric embraces memories of my cherry tree, and of the many summer days I spent under it, at Summit house. This song was set to music, through a New Jersey house, but is still in manuscript and perhaps lost, for I do not know where it is at present.

The Plaint of World-Peace—Late fall, 1914—A memoir of the emotions stirred up within me by the terrible World-War. I heard and read much of World-Peace,—in fact, so much that she almost seemed a personification to me, and I conceived her to be a world-mother, then uttering a prayer of despair in the most solemn terms at her command. The means of warfare mentioned in this threnody are no reflection on a particular belligerent; they are simply types for the expression of the spirit of war, and for the more terrible weapons employed by both sides later in the cataclysm. At that time no others of this type were known.

There is a painful personal memory connected

with this poem. I read it in public in a little Poetry Lyceum, which I gave at Davenport, in January, 1915. It did not seem to make any impression on the two professional men who heard me read it. That two-day Poetry Lyceum of three lectures by myself for the advancement of poetry was attended by just seven persons, among them a poet of considerable fame, who complimented me and expressed surprise at such a unique undertaking. It cost me some fifteen dollars, and the free-will offering at the first lecture reduced these to a little over thirteen dollars. The second lecture was attended by an audience of two; the third, by—none. My topics were: A Modern Cinderella, When the Faeries Come Back, and An Hour in Elfland. These discourses dealt exhaustively with the neglect of poetry, the possible return of her public presentation, and appreciative studies of certain typical poems. Just to show how timely my venture was, I must relate how a good lady came up to me after I concluded the reading of my first lecture and told me she had seen a moving picture about Cinderella a night or so before, and she thought she would come to hear me. I am still wondering whether or not she really got the "drift" of my talk. And yet I was not discouraged. I felt that I had somehow made a great and epochal beginning, even if I should never be able to follow it up.

But this Plaint of World-Peace was not

my only poetic work on the great conflict. I am still wrestling with the problem, insofar as I am at work on what I have called "The Book of the War," the alleged diary of a soldier who passed in the spirit through the entire struggle, from Belgium to Paris. The conclusion of the invasion of Belgium is still waiting on my leisure to pen it. But my Plaint of World-Peace is still a favorite with me, no matter what others may think of it.

The Spirit of the Middle West—December 29, 1914—After the rich year of 1914, I was threatened with a creative lull. But this danger soon passed over. If my memory serves me correctly, I spent my Thanksgiving vacation at Iowa university library. Here my former instructor in poetics happened to find me and introduced me to the editor of a little local literary magazine, who cordially invited me to contribute. I promised to send something soon. When I returned home there were other matters to occupy me, but in a few weeks a new spring of inspiration opened for me. I was really hopeful of having at least occasionally a bit of poetry appearing in this new gateway to public recognition. I cast about for some theme that should be Middle West in character, and timely also. As often before this, and even to this day, my poems came in series. I conceived the composition of a sequence of poems in common stanzas, but individual in treatment of subject matter, on the

states of the Mid-West. The present poem was to be the general prolog to these. For a while then my inspiration was under the spell of this magazine, although it never deemed my work acceptable, no matter what I sent.

Lines on Hearing Alfred Noyes—January 2, 1915—This poem was begun immediately after the event it describes. My poetic vein became exhausted after the ninth stanza, and I was unable to touch it again until the above date. It is really a poetic reproduction of Mr Noyes' program of that evening. In order to attend this to me memorable meeting, I was compelled to dismiss school at an early hour, come back sixteen miles to West Liberty, and wait there until early morning for my train home, fourteen miles further on. This little assembly of elect is also memorable for the fact that Mr Noyes invited a pair of laughers and whisperers, directly opposite him in the gallery, to leave the hall or cease their disturbance. It was an impressive declaration against the noisome Philistine in the presence of poesy. I also recall that I spent my time in the station at West Liberty by reading the Book of Job in English.

"Enlivened England and Greece"—Personified England and Greece, inasmuch as these both were the homes of poetic art.

The Trains of Day and Night—July 6, 1915—Prompted by the continual rejection of my verse, I resolved to try the free-verse meas-

ures. I made many careful studies of this poetic medium, but never came to a clear, satisfactory understanding of its principles. Nevertheless, I proceeded to compose in what seemed to me to be the same rhythms. For the authorities on this medium did not seem to agree among themselves on the nature and composition of it. How could I then be expected to know something about it? I could follow suit and write for all that, and do what many another had done and was still doing. The result was this, and the three succeeding free-verse poems.

The Trains of Day and Night is really a symphony in three-stress rhythms, varied occasionally by those of two beats. The following might be selected as a typical stanza:

The lum'bering, bump'ing freight';
The pas'senger train' that bears 'man glid'ingly on,'
In' its hom'y cushions;
The fly'er that spits' grav'el-bits in my face,'
And drives' dust' into my eyes';—
These 'are all' untrue.'

These lines are read in suspended rhythm, especially the longer lines, in which may occur almost any number of secondary stresses, limited of course to a certain extent, either by the number of cadences that can be read in one breath, or the nature of the thought, which often

governs the length of the line. The possibilities of new rhythms and cadences, and their almost endless combinations, may produce a medium well-nigh as flexible as any mechanism of expression can be expected to be, and every subject treated may have its own rhythm nuances.

The theme, as I saw it then, is the triumph of the poetic, creative imagination over the most mechanical phenomenon of our age, the railroads. I had always been fond of watching trains come in and pull out. Often, after darkness had fallen, I took long walks, invariably stopping at the station, until the freight, passenger trains, and flyer had passed. It was during these studies that I stored away impressions for future use. And I tried to create my opportunity by aiming to write for a certain magazine of modern poetry. It is almost needless to say that I was not deigned admittance to this exclusive periodical. But this does not prevent me from enjoying my dream-children when I please.

The Age and the Artist—July 8, 1915—The theme and inspiration of this odic poem was something I had read, which ran somewhat similar to lines one to three of the completed work. I had heard of a magazine called "Seven Arts," and I wondered what the seven arts of America might be. I made my own category. In fact, I may say that I utilized everything of importance that I had ever read on the practice of the fine arts in our country. On the day I drafted this

poem it seemed that all the facts and images came at my bidding. I had only to select the significant and symbolical details related to the general theme.

The rhythms here resolve themselves into four-stress lines, yielding now and then to three, and two-beat cadences. Each part has its own introduction, descriptive strophes, and interpretative conclusion.

"Furor Teutonic"—That peculiar energetic tempo characteristic of these masters in general.

"Redeeming fallen Eve through Christ"—There in Paradise, the temptor; here, the repeller of temptation; on the strength of the gospel in Genesis 3, 15.

Part VI concerns itself with the celebration of the distinctively American art of the short story.

The Seven Pits represent the seven sources of inspiration for the professional story writer.

The Streets of Progress—July 9, 1915—This is a magical phrase which occurred to me in the library at Iowa, perhaps inspired by something I had been reading, and aptly descriptive of a vista of one of the streets. Presently the first strophe took shape in my mind, and then upon paper. It was not, however, until the above date that the whole assumed its complete form. It may perhaps be classed as a four-stress ode in free verse.

The Descent of the Eagles—July 9, 1915—This

poem is a descriptive sketch of an actual occurrence in a small hotel at Iowa. My studies at Iowa were always concerned with poetry, and only incidentally with school work, and other life-facts. Hence the need of encouragement mentioned in the poem. Easy as the final interpretation may seem now, I was years in perfecting it.

Who Am I?—September 16, 1915—The first three stanzas of this lyric have been extant since May 21, 1910. They really belong to the Busy-Bee Syndicate days, but always failed to satisfy me, until I gave them an optimistic turn in the last stanza. The poem sprang from my despair over my own career in life, and gives my feelings at that time almost exactly.

"Shame"—For having made a failure of life. But there is always one consolation that I can truthfully say I have never lost: The grace of the Word, the hope of seeing His face, even though I have lost sight of it at times,—a hope deferred because of the fall of my race, compared with which the shame of failure in life of an individual is nothing.

Can You Guess?—September 26, 1915—A spontaneous inspiration growing out of the refrain, which occurred to me first. Perhaps previous inspirations hovered in the background; perhaps a beautiful face seen somewhere at a public gathering gave me the phrase, "vision of loveliness;" I cannot now recall.

If I Should Come—January 27, 1917—Another spontaneous inspiration. The first stanza grew into perfection quickly, and soon the entire lyric took shape in my mind and I had only to work out the details. It is a conversation between two lovers. He speaking first, and She answering, twice.

Land O'Leal—January 29, 1917—Again a new impulse gave a new turn to my verses. I had read something to the effect that verse-making could be made profitable, after the manner of those who syndicate their work. I soon set to work with the purpose of writing hundreds of poems on all conceivable subjects, planning to keep these passing each other between the editors and myself. But as usual, school-work, distasteful as it has always been to me, dried up my new Parnassan well, and none of my verses ever saw the light of publication. However, such was the time that gave birth to Land O' Leal, a favorite with me ever since.

To a Suicide—January 29, 1917—The circumstances of the origin of this bit of didactic verse were the same as those of the above poem. I strove to develop a style of my own and a kind of poetry distinctively mine, at the same time helpful to those who were supposed to read it.

The Sonneteer—February 13, 1917—This short story in rhyme, with the setting of the sonnet and the professional sonneteer in the background, occupied me in spare moments for

several weeks. I remember that in our poetics at Iowa we had studied sonnet exercises in two-stress meter, and I planned to use the successive increase in the stress in each sonnet-stave as a climactic device to bring up the resolution at the end. It is an excellent object lesson of the fact that a professional poet may use his art even to court his love.

Phillippa—May 20, 1917—This tale of the first century of our era is the first of a series of poetic romances which I planned to call "Tales from History," each dealing with the distinguishing mark of each century as its theme. They were originally supposed to be short stories in prose for the Busy-Bee Syndicate, which, however, shamefully rejected them for one or two to me trivial reasons. Therefore when my correspondence instructor called for a specimen of blank verse, I transformed my original Phillippa into poetry of her own, all of which, except the last paragraph, was drafted March 10, 1914. The conclusion was not written until the date given above. My problem was to create a concise, clean-cut, and swiftly told tale that should contain all the elements necessary and no more.

Radium—May 21, 1917—Really a companion-piece to My First Aeroplane. The inspiration and circumstances of composition are the same as those of the earlier sonnet. The reputed wonderful nature of radium had fascinated me ever since childhood and I often tried to interpret its

meaning in the grand economy of the universe. Now, under the urge of writing on such a theme, I found the opportunity to express myself. There are two versions, the earlier dating from March 25, 1914. This sonnet gave me considerable difficulty, for the thought did not at first seem to yield readily to smooth expression.

Kitty and Doggie—September 4, 1917—And hereby, once more, there hangs a tale! I had arranged all my poems into eight distinct programs for recital reading. Many a time I slipped away to the school house, only a block distant from North Hill house, in the summer vacation, or on Saturdays during the school season, to practice and rehearse them again and again. But for monetary and other reasons I never succeeded in traveling with my verses. All efforts to procure invitations to read also failed. Yet I prepared and kept on preparing. I noticed, however, that I needed some humorous verse, and I did not find it difficult to write some of it, although at this time I was out of a job and half-sick over my prospects for the future. So one day the underlying idea of Kitty and Doggie came to me and I wrote it down in almost its present form.

The Tale of the Awful Oozle—September 13, 1917—I had been thinking of nonsense verse or words I had read, such as Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky." Supposing we had a little boy to whom this wonderful adventure story had been

read, and that it so possessed his imagination that he proceeded to extemporize himself in this word-originating fashion. Result: The story of the awful oozle!

The Battle of the Rhymers—September 15, 1917—Carrying the above idea more specifically into the realm of art, we are confronted with the possibilities of the Rhyming Dictionary. Turning to this trade journal of the poet, we find that about seventeen rhymes exhaust the list on "irk." Converting this into poetry, we may get the beautiful setting here presented, the excitement of the contest, the resourcefulness of Dirk, and the farcical outwitting at the end. Indeed a test for an elocutionist!

The Gate to the Middle West—December 29, 1917—The last of the poems intended for the new magazine at Iowa. It celebrates the first of the Mid-West States to be sung under the original plan. But it now remains a fair paean of the prowess of the entire Middle West. It also has come to be an appropriate epilog for Modern Moods and Measures, because of its racy virility, its idealism so rooted in the very soil, and its precision and inspiring realism. At least that is what I tried to put in it!

My Lines—January 27, 1917—This is really one of the firstlings of the poems I tried to commercialize. It was intended as an earnest of what was to follow. I had often been provoked at the indifferent reception my lines had enjoyed,

ever since "I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." My work seemed to be treated as if there were nothing to it, no meat in it, without any meaning, while it almost teemed with content for me. Therefore, the sole reason for writing the Preface, and especially these laboriously compiled Notes, has been to show what all these poems have meant to me, and what they may come to mean to others, if they will but do what they are accustomed to do in any other phase of everyday life—investigate honestly. Hence my insistent assurance in the first line here:

My lines, my lines have meaning,

even if one had not thought of them in that light. The rest of this epilog is easily interpreted. I simply developed my theme up from the foundation of my experiences in life, and thus upon the logical chronology of my poems, so that this epilog contains the several main strains of both inseparably welded together. There is then a new individuality here in this unified work, and the reader must help me find and define it.

And now I shall relax and lean back with a wondering chuckle at what the world may say until it returns its verdict.

The End

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